HISTORICAL DISSERTATIONS

Lt. Col. K. A. RASHID

PROGRESSIVE BOOKS
LAHORE.

HISTORICAL DISSERTATIONS

By

Lt. Col. K. A. RASHID (Rtd.)
A.M.C., F.C.P.S. (Pak) M.R.C.P. (Edin)
M.I.H.F. (London) F.C.C.P. (U.S.A.)

Vol. II

PROGRESSIVE BOOKS
40-B, URDU BAZAR, LAHORE

1st Edition . . . . July, 1978

No. of Copies 1000

Price . . . . Rs. 35.00

Pinted by M. Naseer Baig, at Jadeed Urdu Type Press,
39, Chamberlain Road, Lahore and Published by Progressive
Books, 40-B, Urdu Bazar, Lahore.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

The first part of this book was published in 1962, by Dr. Moin-ul-Haq, Director of the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi. It comprised mainly papers which had been read by the author on the annual sessions of the Society. These papers were based on original research.

This second volume is being published after a lapse of sixteen years, and also comprises papers (mostly published) based on author's original researches. Most of the matter has come to light for the first time.

The last part of this volume comprises Glimpses from the Author's Autobiography, and consists of four chapters, two of which were published in "The Pakistan Times" of Lahore and the other two are seeing the light of the day for the first time: namely, Maulana Obeidullah Sindhi and Maulana Abu al-Kalam Azad. The remaining periods of the author's autobiography are under preparation and when completed the autobiography will be published as a whole in a separate volume.

The author does not claim any finality in his researches, but professes to present basic material for further research. Two of the articles published herein have drawn attention of the Iranian scholars and an appreciative criticism was published in the learned journal "Hunar-o-Mardum" from Tehran in 1977. The author is grateful for this attention. Previously too, the Iranian scholars have taken note

of the author's other contributions, such as, Tazkira Talib Amuli.

The author feels proud that his articles have also drawn attention of the Russian scholars, like Gonkovosky, who has referred to the author's writings in his remarkable book "The People of Pakistan". This book was first published in Moscow in the Russian language in 1967, and then translated into English and published from Lahore by Peoples Publishing House. The author is very grateful to these scholars to have taken note of his writings. "Index Islamicus", published from London has also mentioned more than half a dozen references of the author's writings, published in various journals. This has greatly encouraged the author to continue his researches.

This volume comprises mainly articles on Archaeology, Medieval History, Paintings, Calligraphy and Current History. It has been the constant effort of the author to throw new light on subjects known and unknown. This will encourage further research on topics discussed. Research is a continuous process which goes on and on till the whole truth is unfolded.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, research revolves round Mystic and Literary topics which has put a setback to our material progress.

Knowledge according to the Quran (علم الاسماء) is Cosmic knowledge and Scientific Knowledge (35 : 27, 28). It is all experimental. But it is surprising that knowledge of the Spirit of Soul which has been

given to us in a very meagre quantity (17 : 85) has made the Muslims run after it blindly ! Concocting of fables and emotional outbursts are our only achievements ! I wonder if it is not time to set the clock right and pursue what the Quran demands.

June, 1978 (K. A. RASHID)

51/3, Alauddin Road,
Lahore (Cantt.)

RANIKOT

THE LARGEST FORT IN THE WORLD

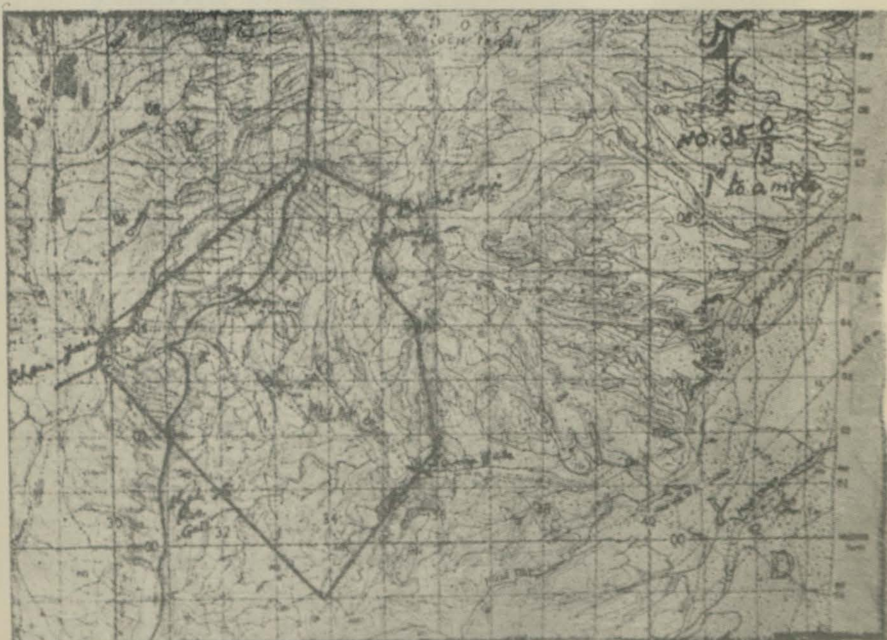
In the north-west corner of Sind in Pakistan, lie the Kirthar range of hills, which stretch between [illegible]

[illegible] the wall over a circumference of 18 [illegible] it appears like the Great [illegible] winding sinuously over the hills [illegible] they impress some

[illegible] Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, Karachi, 1907. [illegible]

[illegible] Survey of Pakistan, Map No. [illegible] between [illegible]

A. W. Hughes, Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, London, 1876.


No. 35 O/13
1" to a mile

RANIKOT

(THE LARGEST FORT IN THE WORLD)

TO the north-west corner of Sind in Pakistan, lie the Khirthar range of hills, which stretch between 27′.55° North latitude, and run southward along the western frontier of the Province to a latitude of 26′.15°. It terminates in the Kohistan Mahal at about 25′.43° latitude. The total length of this range is 150 miles, and its general height varies between 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea level. The hills consist mainly of limestone, but sandstone and rubble are also found in plenty. It is calculated that the rocks belong to the tertiary system of geological nomenclature.[1] The area is rich in minerals ; although not yet fully tapped.

Situated strategically on this range is the largest existing fort in the world called Ranikot. It is known by other names too, such as Runikot, Ranika Kot, and Mohun Kot.[2] It lies 18 miles to the south-west of Sann in the district of Dadu. Sann is 56 miles to the north of Hyderabad, in the province of Sind, in Pakistan. Perched high up in the hills, the fort stretches across the hills over a circumference of 18 miles. From a distance, it appears like the Great Wall of China, running sinuously over the hills, valleys and ravines, very tortuous in places, some-

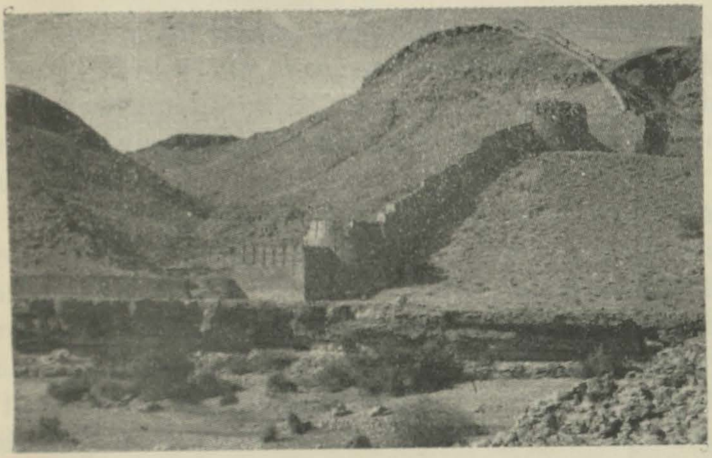
---

1. E. H. Atken. Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, Karachi, 1907. I have my doubt about the height. The Survey of Pakistan Map No. $35\frac{0}{13}$ gives the contours between 500-2000 feet.

2. A. W. Hughes. Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, London, 1876.

times suddenly descending. It is indeed a very skilful work of military engineering.

It has a very difficult approach, and the road, which leads to it from Sann, is in a very bad shape. It runs south-west from Sann Railway Station. In fact, there is no road worth the name, and it takes about an hour and a half to cover this distance of 18 miles on a jeep. The road, if it may be called so, ends at the fort. As one approaches the fort, one can see the walls of this gigantic structure hovering along the ridges interspersed with circular and rectangular towers to the right and left of a dried stream (Picture No. I). The main gate, if it may be so called, combines in itself the unique characteristics of a gate of entry, a draw-bridge, and a dam (non-existent now). After walking through the interior of this fort one can survey its strategic layout which is most amazing. One is forced to come to the conclusion that a long time ago, when this fort was built, this area was a fertile valley through which a stream of fresh water flowed. It was then thickly populated. Sir William Napier in his *Administrative Report of Sind* says, "Vast tracts of fertile but uninhabited land, and many anciently peopled sites, were also discovered, showing that the riches and magnificence attributed to Scinde in former days were not exaggerated, and that the right road was being followed to restore them again. One of those ancient posts was very remarkable. Noted on the maps as Mohun Kote, it is called by Sir Alexander Burnes a fortified hill ; but the country people know it by the name of Renne Kote; and it was found to be a rampart of cut stone and mortar, encircling not one but many hills, being fifteen miles in circumference and having within it a



Picture No. 1. The wall of the Fort hovering along the right side of the hills interspersed with circular bastions. A rectangular tower can also be seen. The wall can be seen forking to the right, ending in a tower.



Picture No. 2. One of pillars of the draw-bridge in its original position can be seen with holes on its right side running in a line from above downwards, for the insertion of metallic obstruction,

strong perennial stream of purest water gushing from a rock. Greek the site was supposed to be yet no Greek workmanship or ruins were there, and the ameers having repaired the walls had the credit of building them."

Indeed around this stream of clear water had grown up a veritable population. The stream was further reinforced from the dams placed under the draw-bridges of which there was one at each of the gates, called the Sann and the Amri respectively. This served a double purpose; first, it increased the quantity of water in the valley to form a lake stretching across the entire length of the valley; and secondly, it formed an important part of the defence. Perhaps the fertility of the valley could be revived again by rebuilding the dams at the same places. This fertile flourishing valley must have been a great attraction to the invading armies in days gone by. In order, therefore, to protect it from the intruders the then rulers, whoever they may have been, built themselves a stronghold of such unique dimensions. How long ago this must have been, I am not in a position to assess. But when I come to deal with the date of its construction, I shall put forward my views after taking all aspects into consideration. In the meantime I shall proceed to enumerate my other observations.

The Gates—The gates are not traditional gates visible from outside but entrances. This fort has four such entrances or gates; namely: (1) Sann or the Eastern gate; (2) Amri Gate or the North-Eastern Gate; (3) Shah Per Darwaza or the Southern Gate; and (4) The Western or the Upper Gate (Mehan Gate).

The eastern or the Sann gate is known after the

name of a small hamlet, which lies to the east of the fort about 18 miles away. The Amri gate is known after the name of Amri, which is archaeologically a very well-known and important place. It has been twice excavated by eminent archaeologists and is reputed for its culture. Amri lies 15 miles north of Sann along the Indus river on the main road running to Larkana. This also suggests to us the great antiquity of the fort. This fort perhaps came to be built when Amri was still flourishing and hence the north-eastern gate was named after this famous place as was the custom in those days to name gates of towns and forts after the famous places.

The southern gate or the Shah Per Darwaza lies on a lower plane than the Amri gate. The eastern or the Sann gate is the lowest gate; and finally the western gate is the upper gate (Mehan gate), which is towards the upper citadel.

There are two more structures situated within the fort wall. They are in the shape of small forts or citadels; one atop the other located at different levels. The lower one is called Miri, and the upper is called the Sher Garh fort. Both these are residential forts and must have been occupied by the head of this dominion. The Miri fort is approximately in the centre of this fortification. It is about three miles from the Sann gate, and beyond this to the western gate is another two miles. The distance has been judged from the travelling time. Thus the diameter of the entire area is five miles. The circumference has been variously calculated as 15 and 18 miles. But it must not be lost sight of that the circumference is not a straight line. It is a tortuous winding wall going up and down the hills. Hughes

gives it as 15, whereas Mr. G. M. Syed thinks it is about 18 miles in stretch. From the map reproduced here, the circumference measures 13 miles. This, while going up and down the valley, would come to about 16/17 miles. The two citadels just mentioned are for all practical purposes located almost in the centre of the area, and command a very important strategic position. I shall dicuss these two forts later in some detail, when I come to the question of its date of construction. The entire valley is visible from these two forts. In time of a military show-down, these two citadels may well have formed the second and the third lines of defence. In addition to these two citadels, there are found two more fort-like structures. One is situated near the western gate, almost adjacent to the wall and the other is near the eastern gate perched high up on the hill. Both the structures are enlarged rectangular towers. The first one is called *chan-yari*.

The main fort or the outer fortification—The wall is visible from a distance in parts tortuously creeping over the hills and going down into the valley. As one approaches the Sann gate one notices dry stream, once full of water, cutting across the middle of it. In places it still has scanty water, which is clear and palatable. On both sides of the stream there are two rounded bastions from which the wall curves upwards and inwards. In the middle of the dry bed of the stream there are two oval pillars, one in its original position, and the other partly broken and shifted away from its exact location (Picture No. 2). These pillars have holes in them on the distal side, which run in a line from above downwards. These holes indicate that metallic bars were inserted between

these pillars to which wooden or metallic planks were tied to form a dam for the obstruction of water, thus forming a lake in the valley. Remnants of this lake are still visible today scattered over in bits in the valley. On top of the pillars wooden planks were placed horizontally to form a draw-bridge. This enables one to cross from one side of the fort to the other. This bridge was defended by a bridgehead formed by the circular towers on either side of the dry bed of the stream, which was full once upon a time. The natural features of the surrounding ground have thus been skilfully utilised. This system of dam and draw-bridge is also found at the north-eastern or the Amri gate.

The entrance to the fort from this end is rather a round-about one. One has to take a sharp left turn round the left circular bastion to get in. The entrance was thus hidden from sight; and unless one knew about it, it was difficult to locate. There are two circular bastions or towers on either side of the bridge. There are others after them. These have been built by converting the rectangular towers into circular ones. They are a later addition for positioning artillery fire. Originally it appears to me that there were no circular towers at all. This is a very important distinguishing feature in the assessment of the period of architecture of the fort. It will also be seen that these later additions of rounded bastions are built from sandstone and not the original limestone of which the entire fort is built. These circular bastions are also not regularly placed along the wall. They are but few and found only in the vicinity of the gates or at the corner of the smaller citadels. Otherwise the original towers were all rectangular



Picture No. 3. Entrance to the interior of the Fort from the left hand side, showing sentry's post on the left hand circular addition to the rectangular space and the place for the gate.



Picture No. 4. Entrance leading on to the interior, showing rooms for the guard, and two holes in the wall; the upper for the gate and the lower for the horizontal bar. From here one turns to the left to get on to the draw-bridge.

regularly placed along the wall. This circular modification has facilitated a double entry gate into the interior of the fort. This double gate system is a Muslim invention which was introduced into Europe by the Crusaders, who had picked it in Syria. The reason for giving a double gate is to create an extra obstacle to the entry. With the rectangular towers there can only be one straight entry.

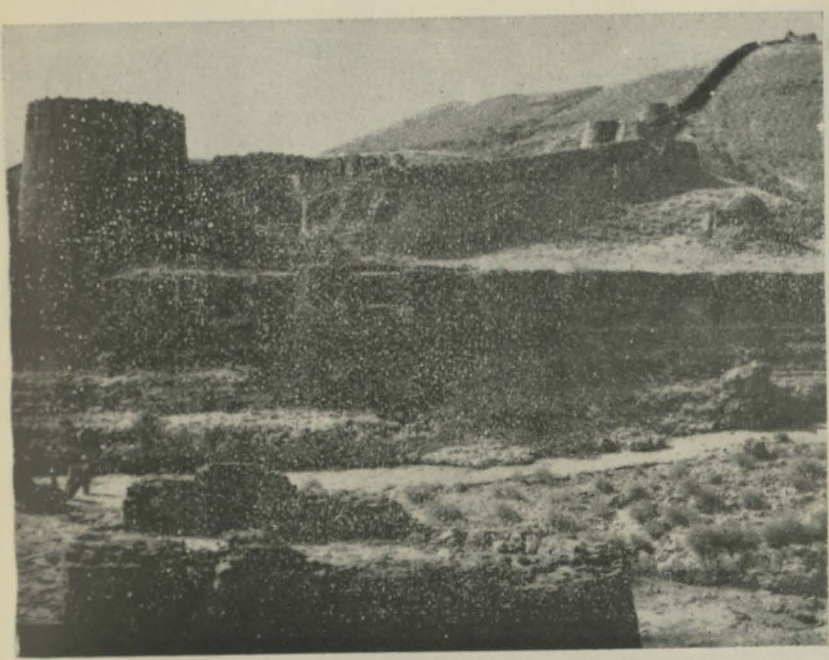
As you enter the fort from the left side (Picture No. 3), you can notice the place of insertion of the two separate gates (Picture No. 4). Along with this and below there is also visible another square hole in the wall for the use of a cross bar to further strengthen the gates. Sometimes a heavy chain was also put across to serve a similar purpose. In this case, I suspect that the chain system was in vogue, because on one side the hole is rather a long one which served for the chain to be pulled in when the gate was desired to be opened. In between the two gates is a rectangular compartment formed by the original rectangle, and a sentry post (Picture No. 3) is noticeable with two guard rooms on the farther side (Picture No. 4). As you cross the second gate you come into an open area, which leads on to the draw-bridge (Picture No. 5).

To the left of this open area towards the rising hills, one notices a peculiar domed structure of ten square feet area with a door of entry. The dome and the arch of the door are of unusual design. I am inclined to emphasise similarity of this design with the structures found in the Serbian Palaces of the Sassanians. But it also resembles some of the structures of the Tughlaq period. This is only a single room. What could it have been? It is certainly

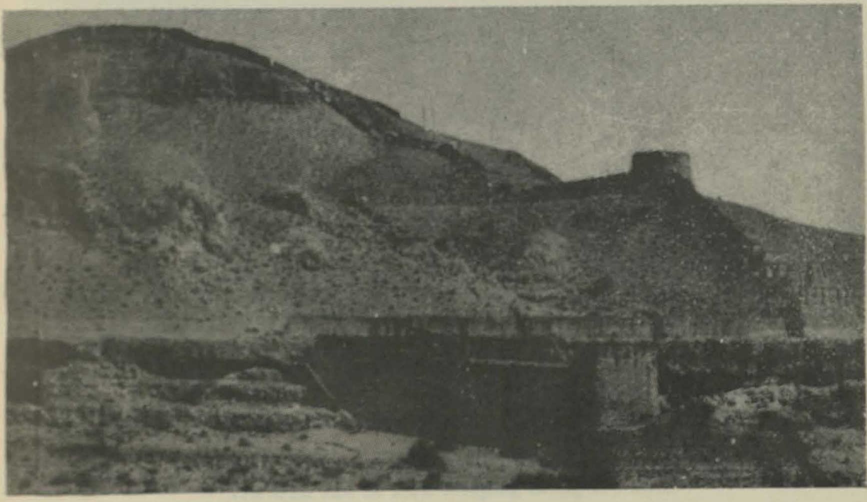
too small for a magazine. But there was no magazine in those days. Can it be the tomb of some one, who was killed heroically and buried here ? But there are no signs of a grave either. The room has four niches on each side. I am inclined to think that it was the living quarter for the man who worked on the draw-bridge. Whatever it may have been, the period of construction of this structure is definitely the same as that of the original fort.

Passing now to the right towards the draw-bridge on the stream, we come to a platform across which wooden planks were placed to form a bridge over the pillars. One crossed from here to the right side of the fort over the stream. On the opposite side there is also a platform to take similar wooden planks (Picture No. 6). This leads one to a passage on the opposite side which is formed by a double wall, which includes the parapet (Picture No. 7). This double wall is meant to give initial protection to the crossing person.

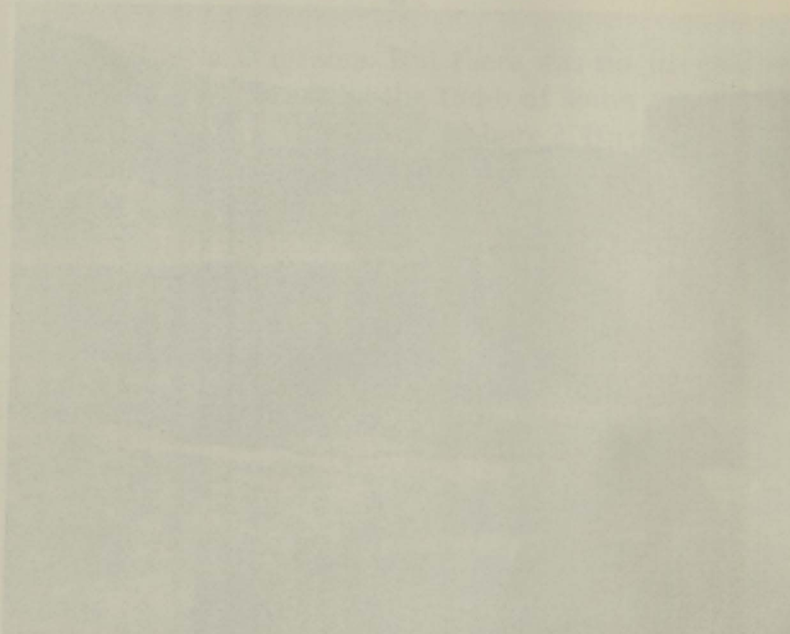
A rampart exists along the entire length of the inside of the fort wall (Picture No. 8) ; but the wall is only double for a short distance along the gates. As you cross over to the right side of the fort, and immediately where you alight, there is a flight of steps going down to the stream (Picture No. 6). This was obviously for the purpose of fetching water from the stream, without having to go out of the fort. The wall then proceeds upwards and is seen forking off and ending into a tower (Picture No. 1), the main wall proceeding ahead without any further interruption. There are three circular bastions visible on the right hand side as far as one can see the wall go and an equal number on the left hand



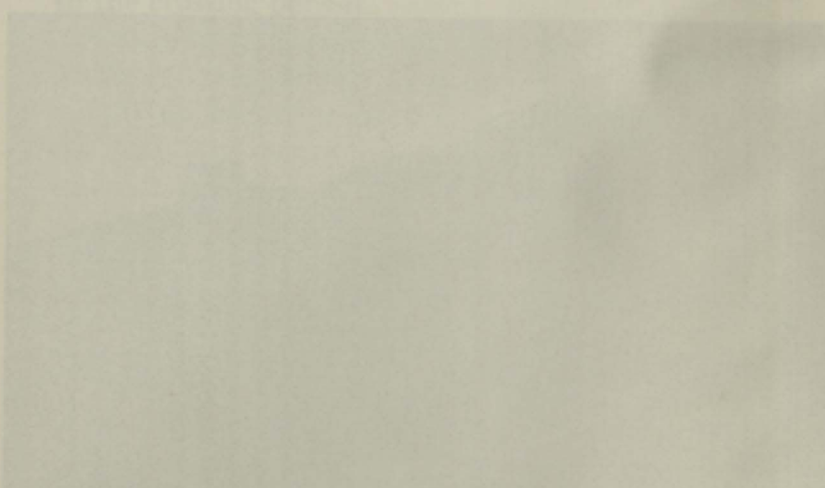
Picture No. 5. Interior of the left fort, showing the pillars of the draw-bridge in the foreground, with the projecting platform leading on to the pillars. In the right background is the domed structure meant for the guard on the bridge.



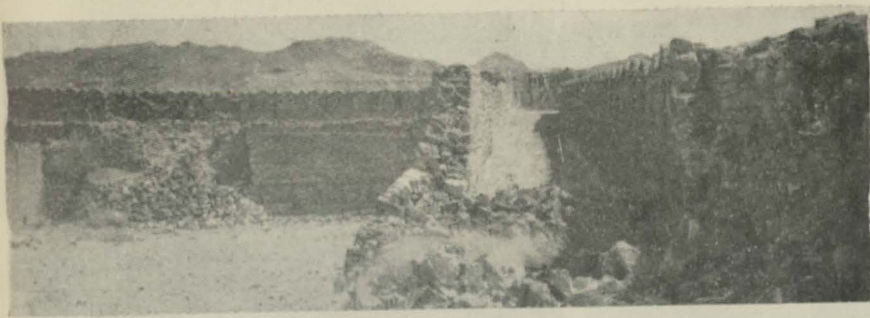
Picture No. 6. View of the right interior, showing crossing place over the pillar and wall climbing up the ridge. In the left foreground a flight of steps can be seen coming down to the stream.



[illegible] the left foot, showing the [illegible] of the draw bridge in [illegible] platform [illegible] on to the picture. In the [illegible]



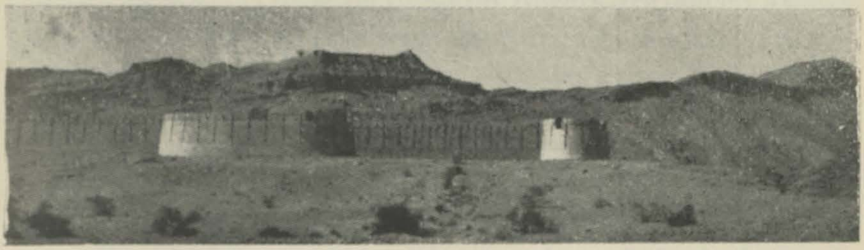
[illegible] of the right [illegible] showing [illegible] where the [illegible] up the ridge. In the left foreground a flight of steps can be seen coming down to the stream.



Picture No. 7. After crossing the draw-bridge to the left one comes to a double walled passage which includes the parapet.



Picture No. 8. Shows the rampart along the entire side of the inner wall. The wall can be seen creeping along the hills.



Picture No. 9. Miri Fort. In the centre of the front wall can be seen a double circular bastion con verted from the central rectangular tower. In the background perched high up on the hill is seen the Sher Garh Fort.



Picture No 10. Three livir g compartments of the Miri Fort.

side, terminating in an enlarged rectangular tower at the highest peak of the hill along which the wall creeps. Beyond this the wall disappears into the valley below. These rectangular towers are placed at regular intervals as has been mentioned before. In some places, they are unusually large and in some places they have been converted into circular bastions. It must, however, be kept in mind that original wall had no circular towers.

The wall is on an average 30 feet high. It is of varying thickness. Near the bastions it is six feet thick. It tapers away from the bastions to a width of five feet. This is exclusive of the thickness of the rampart, which is eight feet wide. This thickness is made up by filling it with rubble. The wall is not upright or straight vertically, but inclines slightly inwards so as to give it more strength. The entire wall is made of limestone. At the top it has the usual corbel arrangement with the machicolations. Quite a considerable amount of repair is evident. The wall was originally constructed for the bow and arrow warfare; subsequently the machicolations have been enlarged for the lateral play of the cross-bow, and perhaps also to accommodate firearms.

This wall, which stretches over an area of 18 miles, is the biggest fortified area in the world, containing two other forts within its perimeter. I say "the biggest," because this Sub-Continent has the largest and the maximum number of forts found anywhere in the world; and this fort is the largest of them all. I make this statement after having seen most of them. The Great Wall of China is merely a wall, and does not enclose an area to form a fort; hence it belongs to a different category

altogether. A comparison of the architecture of the two will, however, suggest some similarity; and hence I do not hesitate to say that it is just possible the fort of Ranikot may have a direct connection with the builders of the Great Wall of China.

The Citadels—Let us now for a while look round the two small citadels situated one atop the other in the centre of this huge enclosure of fortified area. The lower one is called the Miri fort,[1] and the upper one is known as the Sher Garh fort (Picture No. 9). The philology of these two names is not clear to me. The Miri and Lakhshmir-ji-Mari were in fact the palace citadels of the kings, or rather chiefs of these remote times.[2] Perhaps, they are named after some hero. Shergarh fort is the higher and is situated at a height of 1,480 feet above sea level. The two forts are approximately of the same dimensions, which is to say, about 150 yards on either side. Miri fort is, however, slightly bigger of the two. It is divided into three living areas ; each containing living apartments, which are in a bad state of dilapidation (Picture No. 10). These living apartments are certainly of a much later date than that of the actual fort. However, on one side of the left hand apartment, one can see lying several specimens of carved stones with exquisite floral designs (Picture No. 11). These carved pieces are from the original fort, as similar carvings are seen in this fort elsewhere also, strongly fixed in arches and walls (Picture No. 12). The apartments were perhaps built by the Talpurs or

---

1. In the Survey of Pakistan Map No. 35 $\frac{0}{13}$ it is named as Ameri Kot, height 837 feet above sea level.

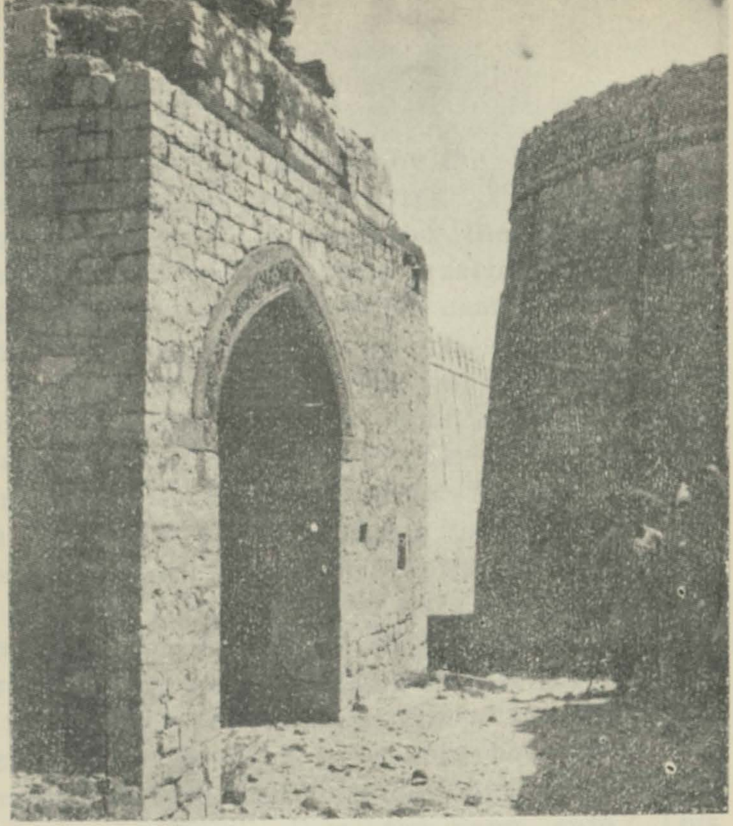
2. H. T. Lambrick, *Sind General Introduction*, Hyderabad, 1964.



Picture No. 11. Carved pieces of stones are seen lying around the living compartment of the Miri Fort.



Picture No. 12. Carving seen over the arch of a staircase leading on to the parapet, in the Miri Fort.



Picture No. 13. Entrance into the Miri Fort. Here again the post of the sentry is seen on the left with the carved arch and square holes for the gate.



Picture No. 14. Graveyard below the Miri Fort towards the we:tern gate. Some of the graves are ɪ erman nt, and have tombstones.

the Kalhoras ; or may be even by the British during some of their military manoeuvres. I have it on the authority of Mr. G. M. Syed that the British never occupied this fort, and these quarters were built about thirty years ago. But the carvings from the original buildings denote a Scythio-Sassanian pattern.

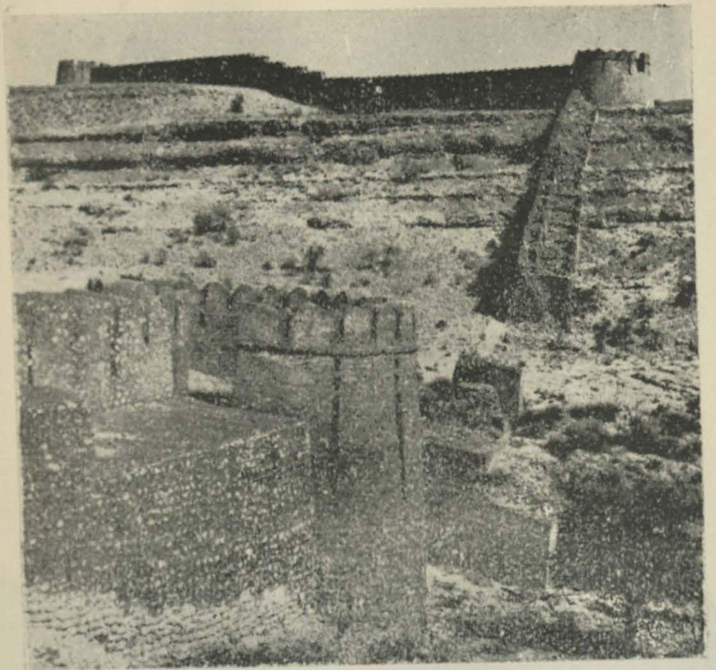
The entrance to these two small forts is very similar to the entrance in the main Sann gate. But the original structure has been altered in the following manner. In the middle of the front wall of the Miri fort there was originally a rectangular tower. This has been extended both towards the right and the left and rounded off so as to form a double circular tower (Picture No. 9). From the outside there are no signs of the rectangle. But as one enters the tower one at once perceives the alteration (Picture No. 13). This procedure has given the entrance a double gate resemblance similar to one I have already described in the Sann gate. This entrance has two arched vaults on either side. The arch is carved beautifully, but the stone on which it is carved is sandstone and not limestone which is the original material used in the construction of the fort. There are, however, smaller arches present, which are carved on the original stone and are certainly the original pieces of the structure.

The second fort called the Sher Garh fort (the abode of lions) is situated at a much higher level, which is shown on the map as 1,480 feet above sea level. Below this is a graveyard of some significance (Picture No. 14). There are no living quarters inside this fort. This fort is nearer to the western or the upper gate. The famous Sindhi author Mirza Qalich Beg visited this fort as his name is seen inscribed by

him on the wall. It is situated on the north-west of the Miri fort. This citadel also has four circular bastions on the four corners. This is a later addition as the original structures were rectangular towers. Towers were made circular at a much later date. Inside these two citadels the wall is double, which is unlike the main wall of the bigger fort, where it has assumed a double shape only near the gates and that too for short distances. This double wall resembles the Great Wall of China very much in its structure. The machicolations and the palisade are of a variety similar to those of the outer wall.

I have already mentioned about two additional structures in addition to these citadels. One is near the western gate and is about 100 yards by 80 yards, and the second is near the eastern or the Sann gate. Both are rectangular. As one approaches the western or the upper gate (Picture No. 15), one comes to the waterfall from where a small stream of clear water still trickles through, forming into small collections of water inside the valley (Picture No. 16). An area of about 8 acres can also be seen cultivated. At this place the land seems quite fertile (Picture No. 17). This is between the Miri fort and the western gate. The valley being porous, the water disappears and reappears alternately at several places.

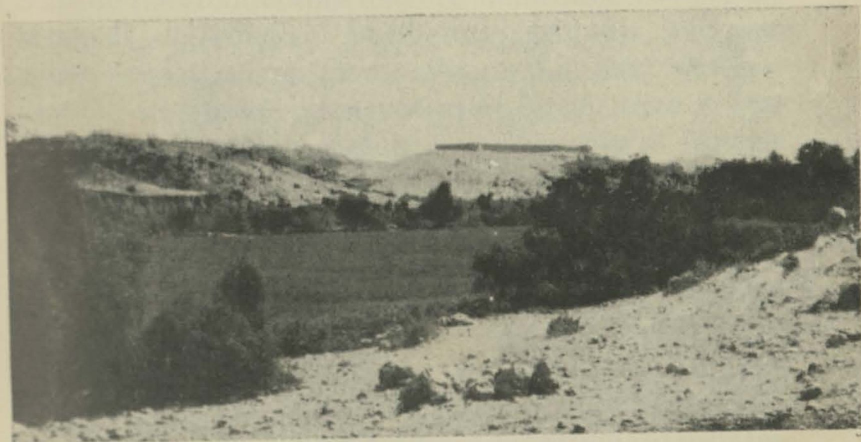
Long before one approaches the Miri fort one can see to the south-west of it a circular bastion projecting over the ridge of a yonder hill. It is a good land-mark for an approach to the citadels. It is a bastion of the southern or the Shah Per gate. Below the Miri fort one can have a good look at the entire valley, which can be seen stretching from east to west. This valley must have looked superb in olden



Picture No. 15. The western gate. Below and to one side of it is the waterfall.



Picture No. 16. The waterfall. This is the main source of the stream of water today. It is spring water.



Picture No. 17. The green patch of cultivated land lying between the Miri Fort and the western gate. In the background is seen the Miri Fort.

days when the place was inhabited and filled with the choicest aristocracy of trees (Picture No. 18).

Period of construction—We now come to the most intricate question about the period of construction of this gigantic monument. Unfortunately the data available to us do not provide any historical evidence of the real architects of this fort. We shall, therefore, have to use our imagination, and concentrate on the architecture itself to determine the period in which it was built. But before we do this, we must keep certain facts in view. Where did the Muslims first learn about construction of fortification ? The earliest Muslim armies passed along a series of Roman frontier forts. They saw them, conquered them and lived in them and modified their designs in later days. Early palaces of Umayyad Caliphs are instances in view. Entrance gates were straight in pre-Muslim days. There are no known instances of a bent entrance during the Roman, the Byzantine or the Persian periods. The history of bent entrances starts with Al-Mansur's city. Tradition attributes the construction of this fort to the Talpurs. Some have even credited the Kalhoras with its origin. Dr. N. A. Baloch, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Sind, has very kindly sent to me the following note which I reproduce hereunder :

"Regarding the initial planning and the founding of the Runni Kot Fort, no detailed record is available, but the family tradition preserved with the Nawwab family of Talpur (Hyderabad District) gives a fairly clear idea about it as follows : The problem of a stronghold for a final defence against an outside attack had engaged the attention of the Kalhora rulers. Mian Noor Muhammad selected Umarkot for

this purpose and rebuilt the fort there and mounted cannons on it. When Nadir Shah attacked Sind, Mian Noor Muhammad retreated to Umarkot but Nadir Shah overtook him there. Mian Noor Muhammad could not go any further south because Kuchh, Kathiawar, Jodhpur and Marwar were all Hindu States and there was no hope of any support from them. Mian Noor Muhammad had to surrender himself before Nadir Shah.

"The example had proved the futility of having a stronghold in southern Sind, and this was pointed out convincingly by Wali Muhammad Khan Leghari to the Talpur rulers ; Mir Karam Ali Khan and Mir Murad Ali Khan, who wanted to build such a stronghold. Wali Muhammad Khan Leghari was a man of great talents, an able commander, an engineer, a physician, and a great poet. When the Amirs entrusted him with the task, he selected the present site of Runni Kot. The hill torrent (nain نئن) Runni had a perennial spring on this site and the small vale through which it ran was encircled by a fairly high ridge line which had some gaps and holes which could be easily filled up to create a natural fort.

"Wali Muhammad Khan's proposal was approved and the fort (outer wall as well as the inner fortress of Shergarh and the Miri or the royal residence) was planned and bulit under his supervision. The only task that remained to be completed was to fit in the gates under the bridge over the Runni. The gates were designed with iron bars but the force of water (in rainy season) simply twisted the bars and the gates did not work. It appears that Wali Muhammad Khan had been appointed as the Nawwab of Larkana and, in his absence, this work was not carried out

successfully. In the absence of satisfactory gates, the fort was considered vulnerable and was not occupied finally.

"Mir Hasan Ali Khan Talpur (d. 1324/1909) in his *Fath-Nama* (Sindhi *Mathnawi*) has enumerated the founding of the Runni Kot Fort as one of the outstanding events of Mir Karam Ali Khan's (along Mir Murad Ali Khan's) rule (1227-1244 A.H.) and described some of its features as follows : Runni Kot is a landmark left by our ancestors. When the plumbers worked at it, they filled in the openings in the encircling hill, from the lowest foundations to the top, mking it a natural ridge line. Then they made the ridge line even at the top and raised a wall on it —another ridge line on the natural one. It was all stone wall extending in length to Krohs (miles). Flanking on it, hundreds of ramparts (burj) were erected. It was further decorated with thousands of large terraces (Kungra) and innumerable small ones. Another stronghold, called Shergarh, was built inside it. Four ramparts were erected on the Shergarh wall. Still another strong structure, called Miri, was built with four ramparts.

"The *nain* (hill torrent) flows through the fort, having water inside the fort area but not a drop outside. This is when there are no rains. Gates on it were necessary for crossing over to the inner fort. They planned two gates, west-eastward, in its bottom. First they raised the stone pillars on the sides and then they fixed the gates. These were iron gates with strong bars. Hundreds of maunds of iron were used, but it did not work. During the rainy season, when the *nain* Runni flowed for a week continuously, the force of water twisted the bars like ropes. As the

gates did not work, the fort was not occupied. Seventeen lakh of rupees were spent on the completion of the fort."

We will now reproduce below a statement from the Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, compiled by A. W. Hughes, in the year 1876. This will throw further light on its history. It runs as follows : "To the south-west of this place (Sann) and on the same torrent, is the vast but ruined fort of Rani-ka-Kot, said to have been constructed by two of the Talpur Mirs early in the present century. If was intended as a stronghold to serve not only as a safe place for the deposit of their treasures, but also to afford a refuge for themselves in the event of their country being invaded. This fort is reported to have cost in its erection the large sum of twelve lakh of rupees, but as the Sann river, which at one time is believed to have flowed near the walls, subsequently changed its course, and caused a scarcity of water in and about the place, it became as a natural consequence, uninhabitable, and was, therefore, abandoned. The Sann river, Rani Nai, now runs through the fort and it is stated that no scarcity of water in any way exists."

Most of this extract is based upon a report made by Captain Delhoste of the Bombay Army, who in 1839 was the Assistant Quartermaster General of that sector. It would perhaps be worthwhile to quote from that report also, before we start to give our own opinion. Here is what the AQMG has said :—

"Rani-ka-Kot was built by Mir Karam Ali Talpur and his brother Mir Murad Ali about A.D. 1812, cost 12,00,000 rupees and has never been inhabited in consequence of there being a scarcity of water in and near it—A rapid stream in the rains runs past

it and joins the Indus, and by a deviation from its course, parts of the walls of this fort have been destroyed. The object of its construction seems to have been to afford a place of refuge to the Mirs in case of their country being invaded—The river believed to be Sann river, ran formerly round the base of the north face, but about the year 1827 it changed its course, and destroyed part of the north-west wall." To this Hughes adds, "At present the Sann river, or as it is there called the Rani Nai, runs through the fort." It is possible the fort has been named after this stream Rani Nai as Rani Kot.

Leaving aside the description of the fort, which si mostly correct, I am of the view that the Talpurs could not have been the builders of this fort. They were neither rich nor resourceful to undertake this gigantic construction. They were despots surviving on a feudal system. Their land was divided into Jagirs under a few chiefs, who in turn supplied them with troops in time of need. They had no standing army. The maximum they could muster was about 50,000 men. In so far as their finances were concerned their revenue was based on a zamindari system, which hardly brought them a share of 35 lakh of rupees per annum. The total expenditure on construction of this fort as given in the above quotation is 12 lakh. After seeing the fort, it is impossible to conceive that such a small amount could have sufficed to build this huge structure. I am of the opinion that no less than two crore of rupees were spent on this construction, and it must have taken at least a couple of thousand people employed for a couple of years to complete this job. The finances and resources of the Talpurs were, therefore, insufficient to meet this expenditure.

It is also difficult for me to believe that this fort was built in the year 1812. It was certainly repaired about that time and a few alterations were made. But the fort is certainly a much earlier construction. My reasons for saying so are as follows :—

(1) The corbels and the machicolations are of pre-gunpowder period and meant for bow and arrow warfare.

(2) The serpentine outer wall is interspersed with rectangular towers, which were in vogue before 10th century of the Christian era.

(3) The naming of the eastern gate as the Amri gate shows that Amri was still flourishing when the fort was built and not buried under the ground as in the last century.

(4) The carvings in the Miri fort are of Scythian artistic patterns.

(5) The dome-shaped structure in the interior of the entrance at Sann gate belongs to Scythio-Sassanian period.

(6) There is a very great resemblance between the Great Wall of China and Ranikot, thus indicating an older period of construction.

The Talpurs and the Mirs have also used this fort for their residential purposes, and perhaps for refuge too in time of need. Another important fact which should not be lost sight of, is this : the Talpurs and the Kalhoras built forts which are to be found on the eastern side of the river Indus, and not on the western side. The repairs and alterations which they carried out in this fort were during their differences with the Kalat State. But the actual construction of the fort must have taken place a long time before that. I shall presently attempt to place its date of

construction in an appropriate period by further arguments.

This construction in my opinion was necessitated by the population that lived around the fertile valley inside the existing fort. Actually there had existed habitation in the valley from time immemorial ; and as the valley was very fertile it was very attractive too. Therefore, at some time in history, the rulers who were permanently settled here, in order to safeguard this place, built themselves a fortification with citadels located in the middle of the valley positioning them very strategically. These small forts or citadels must have also served as the second and third line of defence in time of an invasion as I have already pointed out. To have brought people from outside to build this fort would have entailed a great deal of hardship in the way of their sustenance. Of course there must have been some prisoners also to assist them, and some skilled artisans.

There are indications of habitation below the upper citadel Sher Garh. This is in the form of a huge graveyard. There are some graves with tomb stones and sarcophagus and some ordinary ones (Picture No. 14). There is no doubt that people did live in this valley. Although signs of habitation are not traceable today, it is probable their houses have been washed away by heavy rains. Perhaps some further excavations may reveal the site of earlier habitation. To me it appears that this valley had been rendered desolate much before the time of Hughes and Captain Delhoste. It may even have happened earlier than the time of the Talpurs and the Kalhoras. As I visualise the whole episode, it appears to me that a very long time ago in history,

the draw-bridges at the Sann and the Amri gates were demolished by floods caused by heavy rains or by an attacking army, thus letting the water out and drying the area. The population was hence forced to abandon the place. The stream of water which exists to this day in places shows that it is a clear stream of pure water originating at the small waterfall near the western gate. In olden times this stream was large and the water gushed through it to collect in the lake in large amount due to the dam under the draw-bridges. As this water from the lake rushed past, the alluvial soil must have been taken away with it and so also the subsequent rains must have taken away some, thus rendering the entire valley barren leaving a loose soil full of bolsters underneath, upon which nothing could grow except the desert vegetation.

Now let us come to the real question. Who built the fort ? I must admit that I have been unable to arrive at a definite conclusion. But there are various possibilities, which come to my mind. As to the fort's antiquity, I have enumerated several arguments above. In order now to pinpoint the period of its construction we shall have to deal one by one with the different periods in history. Let us take them together in order of priority, and discuss the feasibility of each one of them. They are as follows :—

(1)	The British	1857-1947	AC
(2)	The Talpurs	1783-1857	,,
(3)	The Kalhoras	1700-1783	,,
(4)	The Moghuls	1500-1700	,,
(5)	The Tarkhans	1450-1550	,,
(6)	The Arghuns	1350-1450	,,
(7)	The Sumas	1325-1350	,,

(8)	The Tughlaqs	1310-1325	AC
(9)	The Sumras	1225-1310	,,
(10)	The Tartars	1000-1225	,,
(11)	The Scythians	200-100	BC
(12)	The Parthians	100-50	,,
(13)	The Sassanians	325-50	,,
(14)	The Greeks	325	,,

Out of this list I have already ruled out the first two. The British were not mentioned, but they can also be brushed aside ; for they built no forts in this Sub-Continent. The Moghuls can be set aside as it is not a Moghul architecture at all. It has none of their peculiarities. The Tarkhans, the Arghuns, and the Sumas were in the Delta of Sind as small feudal lords, and only built round Thatta ; in fact right up to the Tartars they were all here for a short period, and in transit. Feroze Shah Tughlaq appears to have come this way a number of times and even built a lake, Sangar. He paid a courtesy call on the famous saint of his time known as Pir Lal Shah Baz. It appears to me that the architecture of Ranikot fort may have some resemblance to the architecture of the Tughlaq period and with the older forts he built in India. The Hindus can also be ruled out, as fort building was not known to them in the pre-Muslim days.

Passing down to the Scythians, we find that they were not invaders. They had come to settle down. A branch of theirs came direct to the south from the north along the river Indus and settled down in Sind. They are known in history as Indo-Scythians. The Scythians came from Central Asia, and were a branch of the Aryans. It is possible they may have brought with them the knowledge of the Great Wall of China; this great fort of Ranikot does resemble it in many

ways. It will be interesting to note that Scythio-Parthian remains have been discovered in Bhambhor. The outer fortification has been cleared in three tiers, one atop the other. The walls are interspersed with circular towers alternating with rectangular towers. This is identical with the architecture of Ranikot. I presume this is a pre-Muslim structure ; for the Muslims at the time of the invasion of Muhammad bin Qasim were unaware of any defensive architecture. They came across this during Crusades while in contact with the enemy along the frontiers of Iraq and Syria, where Roman fortifications were found. I am inclined to believe that Bhambhor fortification is a Scythian structure just like the fort of Ranikot. Even today in Sind a large proportion of the population is Scythian. The rest of them are Semetic.

The Greeks can be ruled out due to their very short stay. Alexander himself did not spend more than four years in the Sub-Continent. He had no time for construction work. He was an invader, who hurriedly went back with his conquering army, which had become homesick.

Acknowledgments—I am grateful to the under-mentioned persons for assisting me in my journey to Ranikot or helping me to acquire material to write this dissertation. First of all my thanks are due to Mr. William Abbe of the US-Aid (CENTO Gp.), who inspired me to undertake the journey and later by very kindly lending me a few photographs, some of which are reproduced here. Secondly, my thanks are due to my learned friend Pir Hassam-ud-Din Rashdi, who not only accompanied me throughout the journey, but also arranged for transport to take us to our destination, and later by lending me books

from his library. It was through him that I was introduced to Mr. G. M. Syed, whose hospitality we enjoyed for a couple of days in Sann. For the use of books I am also thankful to F. A. Khan, Director of Archaeology, for allowing me the use of his Directorate's library. I am also thankful to Dr. N. A. Baloch, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Sind University, for supplying me information reproduced here. I am also thankful to Mr. G. Ahmad Mufti for typing out the manuscript.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, E. H. Atken, Mercantile Steam Press, Karachi, 1907.

2. *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, A. W. Hughes, George Bell & Sons, London, 1876.

3. *History of General Sir Charles Napiear's Administration of Scinde & Campaign in the Cutchee Hills*, Lieut. General Sir William Napier, Chapman & Hall, Landon, 1851.

4. *The Strongholds of India*, Sidney Toy, William Heinemann Limited, London, 1955.

5. *A History of Fortification*, Sidney Toy, Willlam Heinemann Limited, London, 1955.

6. *Historical Dissertations*, Lieut. Colonel K. A. Rashid, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, 1962, Chapter, "Military Architecture in Pakistan."

7. *Sind, General Introduction*, H. T. Lambrick, Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad, Pakistan, 1964.

8. *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, George Rawlinson, Dodd Mead & Company, New York, 1875.

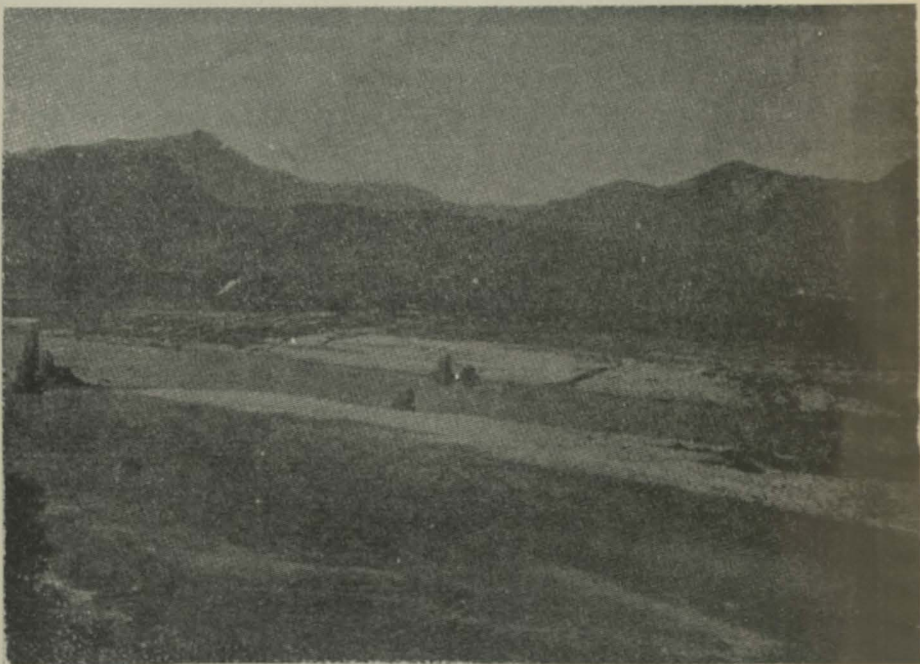
9. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, University of Chicago, 1949, Vol. 9.

10. *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*), Percy Brown, Taraporewala, Bombay, 1942.

11. "Fortification in Islam before A. D. 1250", K. A. C. Creswell, Paper published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1952.



Begum Serai—general view from the east, showing eastern platform of Baradari with six steps, and shadow to the north.



Pitture No. 2

Pillars oi Akbar's boat-bridge across the river near the village of khairabad.

AN OLD SERAI NEAR ATTOCK FORT

TRAVELLING in the olden days in Indo-Pakistan was conducted with that measured grace which characterized all old-time living. Foreign travellers of all ages, but more particularly of mediaeval times, have left copious accounts of journeys in this sub-continent. Their fascinating and informative journals throw an interesting sidelight on daily life in this country, which one misses in the more formal histories by our own sober scholars, who were more pre-occupied with high matters of state. Thus Tavernier, the eminent French jewel merchant, who travelled all over Indo-Pakistan during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb from 1641 to 1668, tells us that travelling in India was more comfortable than in France or Italy. The traveller did not use horses or asses but either rode on an ox or was carried in a coach or palanquin. People rode on little coaches drawn by two oxen and carrying two persons. There was a place under the coach for holding provisions and a small vessel for water or wine. Some of these oxen, Tavernier tells us, could travel on the trot from twelve to fifteen leagues a day for sixty days together. The hire of a coach was about a rupee a day.

Those who could afford to spend more travelled in a palanquin. This was a little couch, six or seven feet long and three feet broad, with balisters all round it. It was covered with satin or cloth of gold, and carried on a bamboo, whilst a slave walked by the

sunny side with an umbrella. A palanquin was usually carried by six men, three on each end.

Besides hiring the transport, however, it was essential for safety no less than for dignity, to hire twenty or thirty armed men, with bows and arrows or muskets, to serve as escort.

Tavernier speaks highly of the roads that traversed the Mughal empire, and compares the Mughals to the Romans for the trouble they took to maintain good roads in their dominions. Further south, he reports, the roads were not so good. The highways were known by the trees on either side, and where there were no trees, stones were set up at every five hundred paces. The people of the nearest villages were bound to keep the trees watered or the stones whitewashed, so that when nights were dark and stormy, the post-runners might not lose their way.

M. De Thavenot, who came to Indo-Pakistan in 1666, tells us of the Agra-Dehli-Lahore highway, which was planted with trees, though, he says, the country was infested with tigers and robbers.

Sometimes, because of the heat, people chose to travel by night and rest during the day. In that case, they had to leave the fortified town before sunset, for the commandant of the place shut the gates before nightfall to guard against robbers.

Another traveller, Lt. Walliam Barr, who accompanied Col. Wade in 1839 on his march from Delhi to Kabul, gives a very picturesque account of what he saw on the road.

"The traffic at Amballa must be considerable, as most of the in-goers and out-comers I observed were *mahajans* (cloth merchants), and *banias* (dealers in grain), the greater number being on foot, though a

few of the richer and better dressed indulged in the expense of a half-fed Tattoo, whose strength was scarcely equal to carry the fat load under which it laboured. As I was amusing myself scanning the features of the various individuals who came across my observation, two handsome Hindustani "Ruths" (ox-drawn carriage) with the *purdahs* (curtain) closely drawn, entered the city. They were preceded by a couple of horsemen, gaily caparisoned and armed with matchlocks, and followed by a large *sawarrie* (mounted retinue) similarly accoutred, and who, with their prancing horses and glittering weapons, formed a very imposing cortege."

On the way to Peshawar, Lt. Barr passed by many serais.

"Quitting Manekyalo, we had an excellent, though winding road, to Rawut-ki-Serai, a large building, rapidly falling to decay but forming a very pretty object."

Again beyond Margulla pass, he passed another serai:

"For many miles beyond this, we had a road almost uninterruptedly level, passing on our left a large caravan-serai, and on our right, a 'baoli' with 110 steps leading to the water."

At last, he approached the Indus near Akbar's Fort at Attock, by which is the Begum-ki-Serai.

"At the termination of plain, instead of proceeding straight to its banks, we ascended an abrupt and somewhat Alpine path, from whence the views on either side are remarkably beautiful. The distance persents a succession of mountains, from the highly elevated snowy peaks of Hindu Kush to the more gentle undulations that bound the valley of Peshawar.

On the right is the extensive plain of Chuch, covered with a bright green sward, and intersected by numerous rivulets; on the left (partly concealed by the ridge on which we stood), the lofty and barren ridge of the Kuttuck range in the Afghanistan; and in front, the noble Indus, now swollen by heavy rains, was bounding onwards with resistless speed, its clear waters, as they dash against the rocks, being lashed into foam and gleaming with silvery brightness wherever touched by the sun's rays.

"A sudden turn concealed these beauties from our sight, and our attention was recalled to objects nearer at hand, the road being execrably bad and requiring pickaxes and shovels to remove the rocks and stones with which it was encumbered. Our tents were pitched on a ridge, in front of a fortified serai, but we did not remain in them longer than to despatch a hasty breakfast, as it was necessary to cross the river at once. The governor of Attock on being applied to for assistance, refused to give us any, nor would he allow the infantry to pass unless their muskets were left outside the walls."

HISTORIC ATTOCK

The importance of Attock grows in history with the building of the Fort at Attock, by Akbar the Great, in the year 989 A.H. From ancient times, it was customary to cross the River Indus at Hund. It was Babar who for the first time crossed the Indus lower down near the site of the present Fort. Hund lies opposite to Hazro on the right bank of the River Indus. It has been a stronghold even prior to the time of Alexander the Great. In the time of Mahmud of Ghazna, the Hindu Shahiya dynasty had its winter

capital here and Mahmud of Ghazna had to subdue it to cross into the land of five rivers. Crossing at Hund had several advantages. Firstly, it cut short the distance greatly in the total length of the entire route, from Kabul to Hazro, as the crossing was advantageously effected on the Kabul River near Jalalabad in Afghanistan. Peshawar was thus bypassed and a double crossing avoided. Secondly, the tactical route into the plains of the Punjab from the North-Western Frontier lay along a line which passed through Hashtnagar, Hund, Hazro and Hattian—the Hatiya (not Bhatiyah) of Utabi; and not along the present Grand Trunk Road over the Attock bridge, which was constructed by the British in the year 1881 A.D.

THE GRAND TRUNK ROAD

The portion of the road stretching from the Water Gate of the Attock Fort to Hattian through Gondal, was constructed by Akbar. Sher Shah Suri in his short reign during the temporary flight of Humayun from India, constructed the portion from Hazro to Hattian and downwards to Rohtas in the plains and beyond. Actually, the road which Sher Shah Suri built was a reconstruction of an ancient highway,[1] which had been built in eight stages, from Purushupura in the frontier, to Patliputra in the famous Mauryan capital.

The direction of each stage was determined by the nearness of an important stronghold. Akbar extended the road from Hattian to the River Indus

---

1. "The Grand Trunk Road in the Punjab" by K. N. Sarkar, M.A., edited by H. L. O. Garrett., 1926, Punjab Government publication, Lahore, page 1.

at the point of the Water Gate of the Attock Fort. We thus see three architects in the area from Hattian northwards who extended the road in three directions; namely : (1) Hattian to Hazro— Sher Shah Suri, (2) Hattian to the Boat Bridge and beyond across the Indus to Peshawar—Akbar, and (3) from the Lahori Gate of the Attock Fort on the main road, to the present Attock Bridge—the British.

After the construction of the lower portion of the Attock Fort, which indeed is the original and the first part of the fort to be built, the Grand Trunk Road was made to run along the fort to the Water Gate by Akbar himself. All along this road, halting places called serais were built both by Sher Shah Suri and Akbar and the other Emperors that followed. Begum Serai, of which we are about to talk, is one of them.

THE BEGUM SERAI

Starting from the Attock Fort, Begum Serai is the first halting place towards the Punjab. This highway was a trade route, and hence caravan-serais were essential along the whole length of the road. They were usually placed at a distance of twelve miles from each other.[1] But Pope has it, that in Persia, they were twenty miles apart.[2] They comprised enclosures of various sizes—this one being the biggest on this route. Cells or rooms were placed along the inside of the perimeter, which was strongly walled to ward off intruders, with a small verandah in front of each.

---

1. "Five Thousand Years of Pakistan", by R. E. M. Wheeler, Royal India and Pakistan Society, London, 1950, page 93.

2. "An Introduction to Persian Art", by Arthur Upham Pope, Peter Davies, London, 1940, page 35.

Thus it formed an independent cubical which afforded considerable privacy. In one corner, a special apartment was bulit as a V.I.P. suite for dignitaries. This usually faced the best landscape view.

Begum Serai is situated about a furlong from the Fort's Water Gate upwards, below the P.W.D. Dak Bungalow. The date of construction of Begum Serai is not known ; nor is it known as to who built it. There are, of course, several views. Some have said that it was built by Nur Jahan, the celebrated wife of Jahangir, while others attribute it to the wife of Akbar. In any case, it is not clear from the historical data available to us as to who built it and when. This much is clear that with the shifting of the boat bridge, and with the subsequent building of the Fort, caravans were diverted along this route, and a serai was needed in its vicinity, not only for the travellers, but also for the convoys of crafts and victuals to rest a while.

THE BOAT BRIDGE

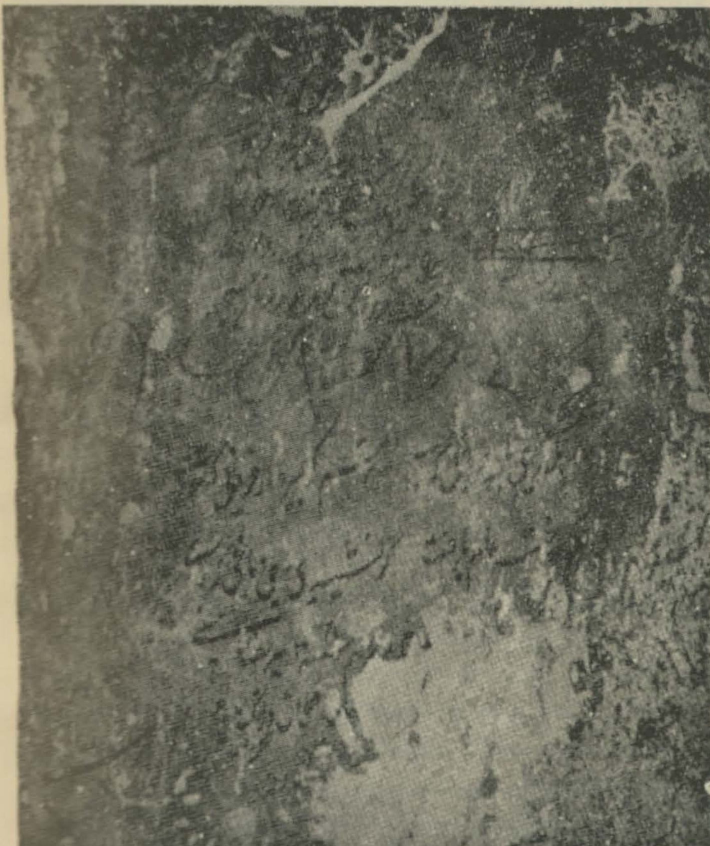
The picture facing page 1 show the pillars of the boat bridge built by Akbar the Great. This picture was taken from the Begum Serai. The distance not only denotes its nearness to the serai but also the breadth of the boat bridge, which is assessed by the distance between the two large pillars. This is approximately 150 yards. The length of the present bridge built by the British in the year 1881 A.D. is 300 yards. Akbar's boat bridge is located between the village of Mallahi Tola on the proximal side of the Fort and Khairabad on its distal side across the Indus. The villages are still inhabited and have many a tale to tell. Akbar imported boatmen from

down country and settled them in Mallahi Tola, which literally means 'The Boatmen's Colony'. The length of Akbar's bridge is almost half that of the British bridge. We have reasons to believe that crossing on Akbar's bridge was mostly done during fair weather. The River Indus is rather difficult to cross during the summer months when the monsoons send down torrents of rain from the high hills. We shall enlarge upon this point a little further, in the forthcoming paragraphs. A good look at the accompanying map at this stage will help to understand the location.

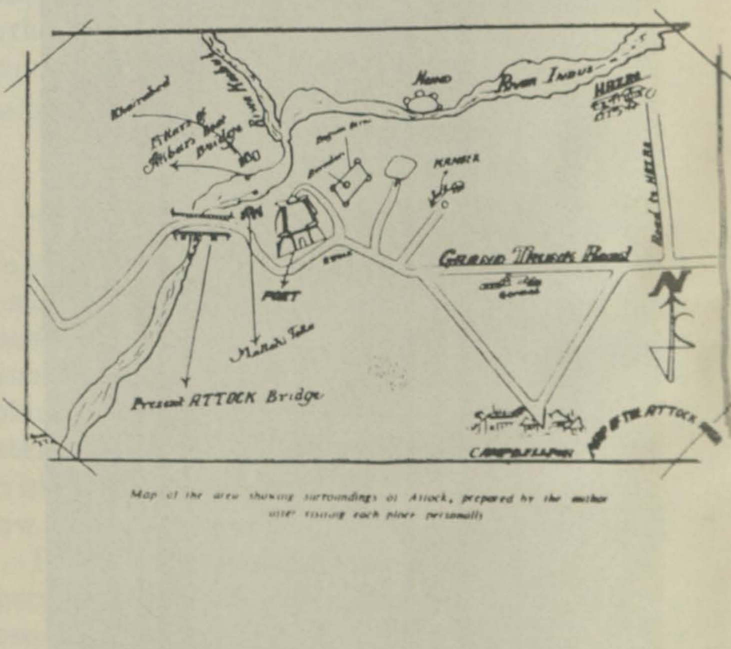
THE BARADARI

The Serai is occupying an area of approximately two and a half acres—picture No. 1. The courtyard is surrounded by independent cells, as we have described above. The structure is reinforced by a corner tower, in which a suite of rooms, with over-looking windows towards the river, has been very tastefully inserted. This had a dome over it, which is visible from the interior. The ribs of this dome show a very early type of Mughal architecture.

In the south-western corner of the Serai is placed a peculiar structure which is popularly known as the mosque. This is not correct. We shall presently discuss this point in detail in what follows. The structure is asymmetrically placed in the courtyard. It is more like a Baradri (pavilion). The building has two platforms on either side : the eastern and the western. The eastern platform faces the main entrance to the Serai, and has six mounting steps to the platform. This may be seen from picture No. 1. The western platform has no steps; this is discernible



Picture No. 5. An inscription deciphered on fiext page.



Map of the area showing surroundings of Attock, prepared by the author after visiting each place personally

from picture No. 4. We contend that this structure is not a mosque, but a Baradari (pavilion) because it does not face Mecca which is south-west, while the building lies east-west ; it has no Mehrab , the rooms are peculiarly situated between two platforms, and do not afford accommodation to many people even in a single row ; and the so-called mosque has itself no courtyard.

THE INSCRIPTIONS

The picture above is a close-up view of the mosque-like structure in the compound of the Serai. It is taken from the western side, and is showing the platform on the same side. It can also be seen that the mounting steps are lacking, which are seen in picture No. 1. Additional steps along the southern wall can be seen which appear to be remnants of a complete staircase, now extinct. These incomplete steps may have led to a top storey which also does not exist now. There are no rooms in this structure. It is one single hall divided by pillars forming arches which divide it into one large and four small apartments, each in communication with the other. On the walls of this hall, or more precisely, on the pillars, we have discovered about twenty inscriptions, written in the hand of travellers who happened to spend some time here. We shall reproduce here only a few of them for the benefit of our readers ; these will be of interest in elucidating our point of view.

A little introduction seems called for on such memorable writing, and before we talk of these inscriptions we feel it necessary to reproduce from a recently published article in the monthly "Yaghma"

(یغما) of Iran. The article is entitled "Tarikh-i-Yadgar" (تاریخ یادگار) and is from the learned pen of a famous Iranian scholar Ahmad Gulchin-i-Maani (احمد گلچین معانی) who says :—

> "Writing on the walls of the mosques, churches, buildings and shrines, has been a habit with common people and even dignitaries. Perhaps, they took the stony structures to be more durable than their own self. During their travels, whenever they came across such buildings they wrote a few lines and left them there. If this custom has proved unwholesome for the ancient buildings, it has proved useful for the different historical periods. I have seen some biographies and history books in which the authors have greatly profited by such writings of kings, captives, scholars, travellers and poets."

After this, the writer describes a book in one of the local libraries of Iran, in which are described similar writings on the walls of old monuments, whereupon travellers, poets and even Emperors have taken care to leave their impressions. This book has been donated by one General Majid Feroze. One of the monuments decribed in this book is the Mazar of Sheikh Ahmad Jam (مرزا شیخ احمد جام). Emperor Humayun, father of Akbar the Great, during his flight to Iran, while visiting this shrine, wrote here a few words in his own handwriting. Surprisingly, the inscription written four hundred and thirty-three years ago, has withstood the ravages of time and weather.

What Emperor Humayun actually wrote was this :

اے همت تو ندا پذیر همه کس ظاهر بجناب تو ضمیر همه کس
درگاه در تو قبله گاه همه خلق لطف بکرشمه دستگیر همه کس

And he ended with the date, thus :

سرگشته بادید بے سر انجامی ،
محمد هایون شنبه چهار دهم شوال سنه ۹۵۱ھ

This structure then, as we have maintained, is a Baradari. It was originally meant to be a resting place. A question may now be asked : why was it necessary to have two resting places in one and the same locality, the Baradari and the Serai ? An appreciation of the situation will show that when the Baradari was built there was no Serai. The Begum Serai is a later addition built round the Baradari. The Baradari came up simultaneously with the Fort, while the Serai was built quite sometime after. It was necessary to build a resting place for the travellers to wait for the crossing hours. The boat bridge was just next door. This resting place was thus an immediate requirement. The date of construction of this Baradari is probably about 1000 A.H. The main Serai may have been built after Akbar, by one of the future regal ladies. The reasons for presuming this are as follows :—

(1) The Baradari is not a part of the main Serai. If it was, it should have been properly incorporated and inserted in the general plan. As it stands today, its position is haphazard.

(2) The structure is located on one side of the courtyard without any rhyme or reason, and is not related to the main building.

(3) It has no reason to be there, except that

it already was there, prior to the construction of the Serai.

(4) An inscription discovered by me is dated 1010 A.H., which is the time of Akbar, not of Jahangir, who came to the throne in 1014 A.H. Picture 7.

Turning to the inscriptions in Begum Serai, like my friend Gulchin-i-Maani, I, too, am amazed how these writings have survived for three hundred and seventy-four years. It is an occasion for the modern manufacturers of ink to ponder the methods of ancient preparations. I am still further amazed that the travellers carried their own ink, kept in portable pots, which avoided spilling even during rough journeys on horseback and bullock carts. What a contrast ; we today have to empty our fountain-pens or put them in plastic bags, while travelling by air. And the pens ; they too must have been of unbreakable material, or carried in properly made cases to avoid their breaking. Perhaps they were made of metal. Gold pens are known to have been used by kings. Silver ones may have been used by middle class people ; or even by the common man, as it was quite cheap in those days. The price of gold in the days of Akbar was approximately eight rupees an ounce ! A gold pen therefore could not have cost more than ten rupees. However, there is no likelihood of the writing material being supplied to the travellers on the spot while in transit. Everyone must have carried his own. And now, the inscriptions :

Picture No. 6. This is dated the 22 Jamadi-us-Sani 1081 A.H. It reads as follows :—

گل محمد سهام متوطن چک جلال الدین

بتاریخ ۲۲ جمادی الثانی سنه ۱۰۸۱ ھ

Picture No. 7. It is dated in two places differently :—

(*i*) Rabi-ul-Awwal 1081 A. H.

(*ii*) Dhiqad 1010 A. H. and some of it reads as follows :—

دزدیده دیده آمد و دزدیده دیده رفت ؟

Picture No 3. It is dated 1088 A. H. and reads as under :—

عرب (غریب؟) بپائے انجا رسید، فراق دوستان بسیار دیده

دوسه.... کار خود نوشته، برگیر از خون دیگر ز آب دیده

العبد محمد فتح سنه ۱۰۸۸ ھ

Picture No. 5. It is dated Muharram-al-Haram 1028 A. H. and reads as follows :

در رهگذری باد چیز های که تر است

ترسم که بمیرد از فراغی که تر است

دی بکر ...... سوخته عالم بگرفت

کز.... نشنیدی زحق دماغی که تراست

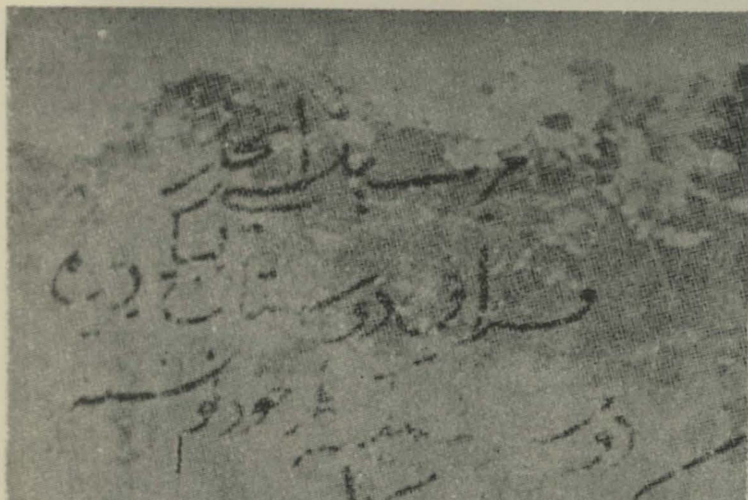
محرم الحرام سنه ۱۰۲۸ ھ میر رضا الحسینی

و فتح خان در اتک آمده بود تحریر یافت

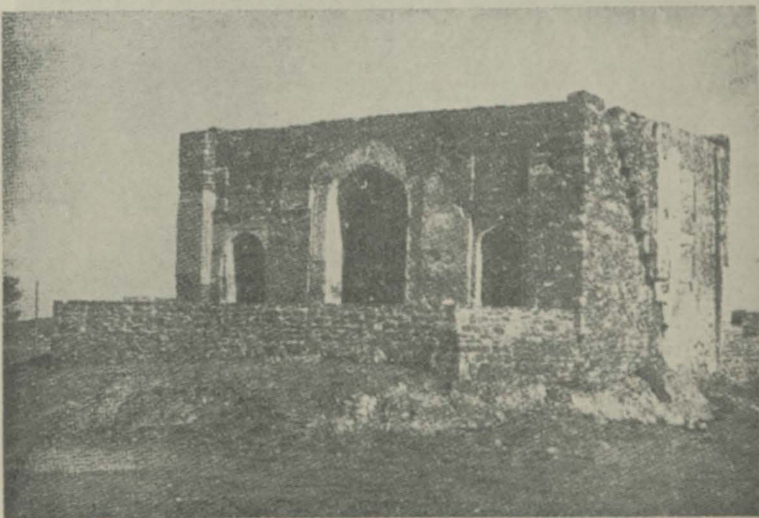
The rest cannot be deciphered by me. I may have even committed many other mistakes in my readings above. An expert will some day improve upon my decipherments.

It may be of interest to note here that Sir Mortimer Wheeler has called this structure a mosque

in his "Five Thousand Years of Pakistan" (p. 94). The District Gazetteer of Attock says that it was built during the reign of Emperor Jahangir (p. 316). One of the Archaeological Reports of Indian Survey of Historical Monuments labels this structure as the work of Nur Jahan. This site, where the Baradari is situated, was probably the best site near the boat bridge and the Fort. The later architects, therefore, chose to build the Serai around it in later days.

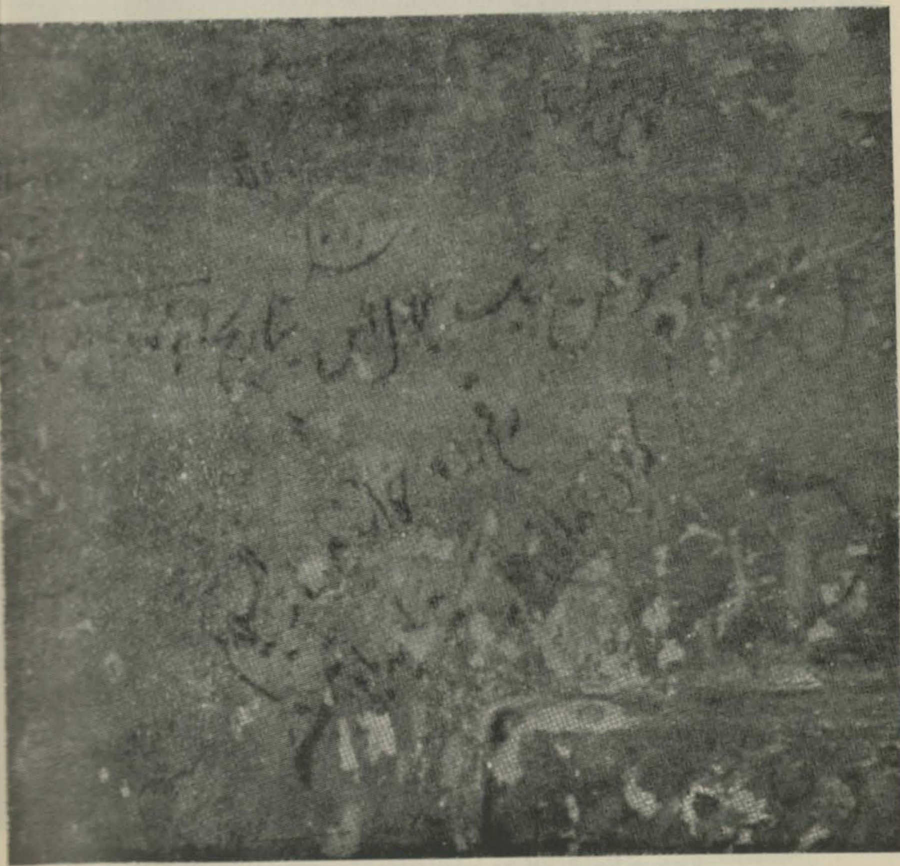


Picture No. 3. One of the inscription on the walls.

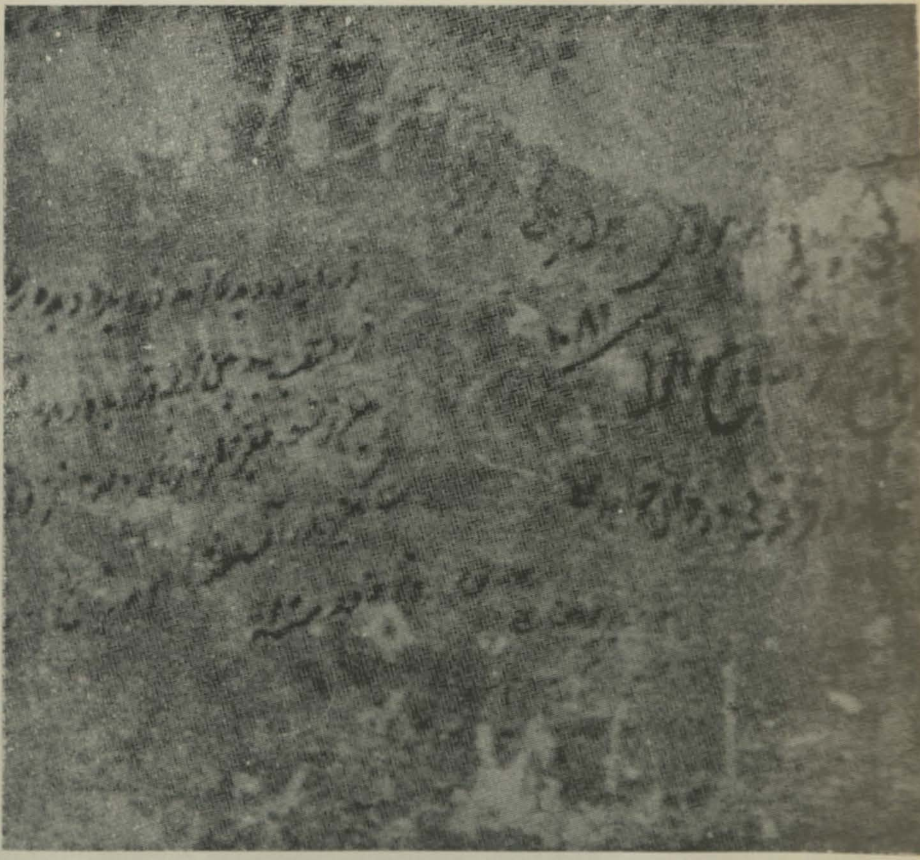


Picture No. 4

Baradari from the west, showing platform without steps.
On the southern side of the wall can be seen the remnant of a staircase.



Picture No. 6. More inscriptions, deciphered on left.



Picture No. 7. More incriptions, deciphered on left.

THE FIRST MUSLIM INVASION OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER OF THE INDO-PAKISTAN SUB-CONTINENT

(44 A.H./664-5 A.D.)

INTRODUCTION

الم تر ان الازد ليلة بيتوا

ببنة كانوا خير جيش المهلب

> Hast thou not seen that the tribe of al-Azd proved themselves to be the best of the troops of al-Muhallab on the night they were raided at Bannah.

In the early days of Islam, Muslim strategy of war was an acknowledged fact, and reconnaissance formed an integral part of it. Before a campaign was undertaken raids to reconnoitre and gather intelligence were properly organised. But in lands far away raids were not possible. Therefore reconnaissance parties were specially deputed in far-off lands to undertake the task. Information was gathered regarding the terrain of the country, its people, its climate, its fruits, rivers and other natural obstacles. In so far as this sub-continent is concerned, we find that as early as the time of Caliph 'Uthman, Hakim bin Jabla had been deputed by him to obtain information about India, and the Caliph had ordered 'Abd

Allah bin 'Amar to issue to him appropriate instructions. I reproduce here a passage from the famous *Chachch-Nameh*, which runs as follows :

و بعض مقرران این روایت و محرران این داستان روایت کرده اند که امیرالمؤمنین عثمان بن عفان رضی الله عنه بجانب عبدالله بن عامر بنوشت که حکیم بن جبله را به هندوستان فرستـه تا علم بلاد معلوم کند ، پس عبدالله او را نامزد کرد ، چون آن بعد از فهم احوال مراجعت نمود بنزدیک ابن عامر باز آمد و تمامت اخبار بشرح و بسط از قواعد رزم و لشکر کشی و معاقل ساکنان آن زمان و نواحی بروی تقریر کرد ، عبـدالله او را بنزدیک امیرالمؤمنین عثمان رضی الله عنه فرستاد ، چون برسیـد و شرط خدمت به اقامت رسانیـد ، امیر از وے پرسید که یا حکیم هندوستان را بدیدی و از حالهـا معلوم کردی ؟ گفت : نعم یا امیرالمؤمنین گفت : صفت کن ، گفت : مـاؤها وشل ، و ثمرها دقل ، و ارضها جبل ، و اهلها بطل ، ان قل الجیش بهـا ضاعوا و ان کثروا جاعوا ، یعنی آب او تیره است و میوه او مقاتل است و ترش و زمین او سنگلاخ و گل او شوره ۔ اگر لشکر اندك رود زود ضائع شود و اگر حشم کثیر و بیشتر روند گرسنه مانند و هلاك شوند ، پس امیرالمؤمنین عثمان بن عفـان رضی الله عنه گفت که در عهد و ثیقت چگونه اند ، وفادار اند یا جفـا خواه ؟ حکیم گفت خائن و غدار ، پس عبدالله را از لشکر سند احتراز کرد و کس را نه فرستاد.[1]

This passage is self-explanatory and need not be translated. It is a well-known fact that when Muhammad bin Qasim invaded Sind he had complete

---

1. *Fateh Nameh Sind alma'ruf ba Chachch Nameh,* 'Ali bin Hamid bin 'Ali Bakar Alkufi, edited by Umer bin Mohammad Daud Pota, published by Majlis-i-Makhturat-i-Farsiyeh, 1939, p. 75.

information regarding its people and the topography of the country. Even the latitude and longitude of important settlements were known to him. Copies of such information were retained with the Caliphal headquarters, and instructions were frequently issued when the troops were in difficulties. We have many instances of such situations and these need not be repeated. The report of reconnaissance given above is also mentioned by Baladhuri in his *Futuh al-Buldan*, although in a somewhat different manner.[1]

Conquest of N.-W. Frontier

These Recce troops must have been sent all along the border of the Muslim empire, adjoining the sub-continent of India, on its eastern side, *i.e.*, on the west and north-west of India. Similar excursions have been mentioned by Firishta, in his history, which were undertaken by different generals of the Muslim army in various directions on the border of the sub-continent.[2] A few instances may be quoted here :

اولین کسیکه از ارباب اسلام قدم در سرحد هندوستان نهاده با هالی آن دیار غزا کرده مهلب بن ابی صفره است، و تفصیل آن سخن آنست که در سال بست و هشتم از هجرت سرور انبیاء صلی الله و آله وسلم عبدالله بن عامر حاکم بصره از جانب امیرالمؤمنین عثمان بطرف فارس که اهالی آنجا بعد از فوت امیرالمؤمنین عمر رضی الله عنه نقص عهد کرده بودند لشکر برده مظفر و منصور بجانب بصره معاودت

1. *Futuh al-Buldan*, Urdu translation—Maulvi Sa'id Abu al-Khair Maududi, published by Darut Taba', Jami'a 'Uthmania, Hyderabad (Deccan), pp. 177-8, 1940.

2. *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, published by Newal Kishore, Cawnpur, 1874, vol. 1, p. 16.

نمود، و در سال سی ام امیرالمؤمنین عثمان رضی الله عنه ولید عقبه را بسبب شرب مدام از حکومت کوفه معزول ساخته، سعید بن العاص را قائم مقام گردانید و سعید در همان سال بطرف طبرستان رفت و امیرالمؤمنین حسن رضی الله عنه و حسین رضی الله عنه نیز در آن یورش تشریف داشتند.

The first Muslim who set his foot on the soil of India and fought against its people was Muhallab bin Abi Sufra. The details of this episode are as follows:

> In the year 28 A.H. during the time of Caliph 'Uthman, 'Abd Allah bin 'Amar, the governor of Basra attacked Faris and defeated the inhabitants who had broken their pledge in the time of Caliph 'Umar. In the year 30 A.H. Caliph 'Uthman dismissed Walid Uqbah, the governor of Kufa, for having become addicted to drinking. Sa'id bin al-'As was appointed in his place. In this very year Sa'id invaded Tabaristan and in this campaign he was accompained by Imam Hasan and Imam Husain.

در سال سی و یکم عبدالله بن عامر از جانب امیرالمؤمنین عثمان رضی الله عنه به فتح خراسان مامور گشته با لشکر گران از راه کرمان عزم خراسان نمود، و مقدمه او حنیف بن قیس بود، پس سیستان و قهستان و نیشاپور را مسخر گردانیده مرزبان طوس نیز با دوم از موافقت زد و سرخس و هرات و باد غیس و غور و غرجستان و مرو و طالقان و بلخ هم بحوزه تصرف مسلمانان در آمد.

In the year 31 A.H. Caliph 'Uthman ordered 'Abd Allah bin 'Amar to conquer Khurasan.

Taking a large army he advanced towards Khurasan by way of Kirman. Hanif bin Qays was commanding the troops. After taking Sistan, Quhistan and Nishapur, the force advanced to Tus. It had subdued all the regions. The people accepted the religion and Islamic forces moved on to Sarakhs, Herat, Badghis, Ghur, Ghurgistan, Merv, Talqan and Balkh, which they also subdued.

در سنه اربعه و اربعین معاویة بن ابی سفیان زیاد بن آمیه را والی بصره و خراسان و سیستان گردانید ، در همان سال عبدالرحمن بن شمر حسب الاستجازه زیاد فتح کابل کرده مردم آنجا را مطیع گردانید ، دوران نزدیکی مهلب بن ابی صفره که از امراء کبار عرب بود از حال مرو بکابل و زابل آمد و بهندوستان در آمده با کفار غزا کرد .

In the year 44 A.H. Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufian appointed Ziyad bin Umiyah the governor of Basra, Khurasan and Sistan, and in this very year by the order of Ziyad, 'Abd al-Rahman bin Shimar conquered Kabul. The inhabitants of Kabul embraced Islam. A little after the conquest of Kabul, Muhallab bin Abi Sufrah entered Kabul and Zabul by way of Merv. Thereafter he entered India and declared *jihad.*

From the above quotations it will appear that Mr. S. Q. Fatimi's admirable article published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan* (vol. VIII, No. I, June, 1963) is a commendable probe into the earliest Muslim campaign of the North-West Frontier of the sub-continent. He has indeed laid open a new vista of historical research hitherto undisclosed. So

far, the world was only aware of the conquest of the province of Sind by Muhammad bin Qasim carried out in the year 98 A.H. The northern conquests have invariably been associated with Mahmud of Ghazna. But it had never occurred to us that the Muslims had entered the sub-continent from its northern side also, as early as the year 44 A.H., although scattered indications of this conquest did exist in the annals of our history. On reading this article some faint recollections arose in my mind, and when I turned over the pages of some references I found further evidence of what Mr. Fatimi has presented, and this I have put together above. I hope, what I have mentioned, and what I am about to mention, will help Mr. Fatimi to further his research in this new domain of history. The present paper is a hurriedly collected and collated data of references which may prove of use to Mr. Fatimi.

Bannah-Bannu

From the above it will have become quite clear that the Muslims conquered Kirman, Khurasan, Kabul, Herat, Merv, Balkh, Bokhara, etc. between the year 28-44 A.H. Kirman is in Sijistan and Herat in Khurasan. It is obvious that both the routes must have been utilised in the to and fro movement, and Bannah of Baladhuri must have been crossed several times; especially when we learn from Firishta that the Muslims entered India from Kabul, Bannu must have been crossed at one time or the other. This Bannah of Baladhuri then, is no other than the Bannu of today. I would like here to give a lengthy quotation to support Mr. Fatimi's thesis, and also to strengthen what has been said above. I shall reproduce from

Elliot and Dowson, who have dealt this matter very elaborately.[1]

"The first invasion we read of was in the time of Abdullah, Governor of Irak, on the part of the Khalif Usman. He was directed by the Khalif to send an emissary to explore the provinces of Hind ; and notwithstanding a discouraging report, Abdullah ordered the country of Sijistan to be invaded by one of his cousins, Abdur Rahman son of Samra. Abdur Rahman advanced to the city of Zaranj, and besieged the Marzaba, or Persian Governor, in his place on the festival of the Id. The Governor solicited peace, and submitted to pay a tribute of two million of dirhams and two thousand slaves. After that, Abdur Rahman subdued the country between Zaranj and Kish, which was then styled Indian territory, and the tract between Ar-Rukhaj (Arachosia) and the province of Dawar—in which latter country he attacked the idolaters in the mountain of Zur, the booty acquired during this incursion was so great that each man received four thousand pieces of silver as his share. Their idol of Zur was of gold, and eyes were two rubies. The zealous Musulmans cut off its hand and plucked out its eyes, and then remarked to the Marzaban how powerless was his idol "to do either good or evil". In the same expedition, Bust was taken. After this, Abdur Rahman advanced to Zabul and afterwards, in the time of Mu'awiya, to Kabul. The year in which this inroad was made is not

---

1. *Studies in Indian History*, Part IV, Elliot and Dowson, published by Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., Calcutta, 1954, pp. 142-5.

mentioned, but as Abdulla was removed from his government in 36 A.H., we may consider it to have taken place about the year 35.

"In the year 44 A.H. Muhallab ibn Abu Safra, whose army chiefly consisted of the tribe of Azd, which was very powerful in Khurasan, and contributed largely to the downfall of the Ummayids—advanced on the Indian frontier as far as Banna (Bannu) and Alahwaz (or "Alahwar"—Lahore ?) two places situated between Kabul and Multan. Firishta makes him penetrate as far as Multan, and opens his history by saying he was the first chieftain who spread the banners of the true faith on the plains of Hind. He says he plundered the country and brought back to the headquarters of the army at Khurasan many prisoners who were compelled to become converts to the faith. Muhallab had been detached from the main army which had invaded Kabul from Merv, under 'Abdur Rahman bin Shimar, and had made converts of twelve thousand persons. Muhallab subsequently made himself conspicuous as Governor of Alahwar, and exterminator of the Azrakian insurgents, and as a traitor to his master, 'Abdullah ibn Zubair, the Khalif of Mecca. He was the ancestor of those chiefs, who under the name of Muhallabis often occur in the history of the later members of the Ummaya family, until they were nearly exterminated at Kandabil in 101. H. Gildemeister doubts the truth of this expedition, as Sijistan had not yet been conquered; but he forgets that the Musulmans did not penetrate to India through Sijistan, but through Kabul."

From the above quotation two things become

clear; firstly, Bannah is the Bannu of today and al-Ahwaz is the Alahwar, *i.e.*, Lahore of Swabi Tehsil in the Mardan district; and secondly, the Muslims had penetrated through Kabul and their entry into India in my opinion was through Bannu. Later incursions may have also used the Bannu route. In any case it becomes established that the Muslims had conquered the north-west frontier of the sub-continent in the year 44 A.H. Al-Ahwaz is obviously a mistake committed by the scribe as has often happened, and the learned writer's opinion that it is Lahore and not Al-Ahwaz is also corroborated by Elliot and Dowson. The location of Lahore has been amply thrashed out in the 'Lahore Number' of *Naqush*, 1963, which Mr. S.Q. Fatimi has referred to in his article. There remains no doubt that the Al-Ahwaz of Baladhuri is the Al-ahwar of the Swabi Tehsil, and not the Lahore of the Punjab, which was indeed not known by that name at that time, as correctly presumed by the learned writer.

order; firstly, Bannah is the Bannu of today and al-Ahwar is the Alahwar, viz., Lahore of Swabi Tehsil in the Mardan district; and secondly, the Muslims had penetrated through Kabul and their entry into India in my opinion was through Bannu. Later incursions may have also used the Bannu route. In any case it becomes established that the Muslims had conquered the north-west frontier of the sub-continent in the year 44 A.H. Al-Ahwaz is obviously a mistake committed by the scribe as has often happened, and the learned writer's opinion that it is Lahore and not Al-Ahwar is also corroborated by Elliot and Dowson. The location of Lahore has been amply thrashed out in the Lahore Number of *Nuqush*, 1963, which Mr. S.Q. Fatimi has referred to in his article. There remains no doubt that the Al-Ahwaz of Balādhuri is the Al-ahwar of the Swabi Tehsil, and not the Lahore of the Panjab, which was indeed not known by that name at that time, as correctly presumed by the learned writer.

SOME STYLES OF PRACTICE-WRITING BY GREAT CALLIGRAPHISTS

THE importance of *Kalimah* in the domain of art is great. Besides the purely religious significance which it bears, its artistic potentialities have been unquestionable. The "letters *alif* and *la*—two letters with vertical stems—لا اله الا الله—form a wonderful basic pattern for every kind of decorative ornamentation of the formula which is, of course, found wherever Muslims have reached, and in both minor arts and architectural inscriptions these weighty words have been ornated with so intricate and bewildering interlacing ornaments that an uninitiated would scarcely imagine that the essence of Muslim faith is concealed behind them. . . ." This is indeed enchanting.

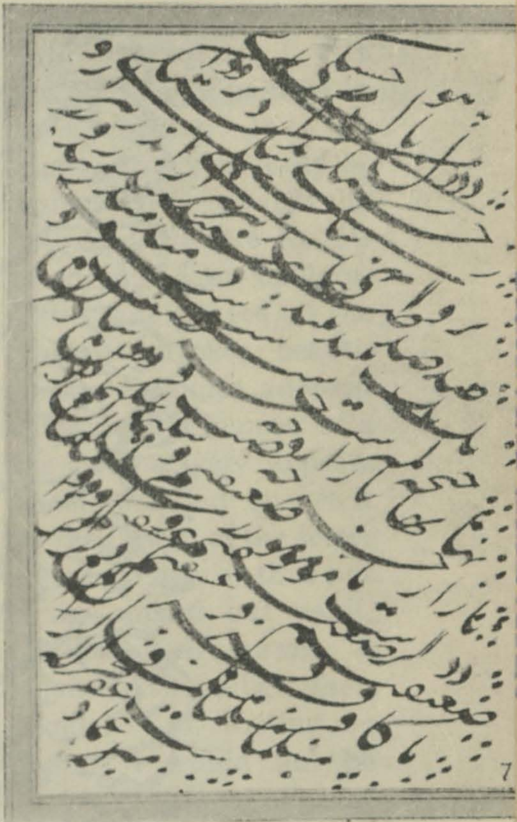
In my opinion this Islamic formula is the beginning of Muslim calligraphy. This was the main magic force of Islam in the world of art. The letter *alif* became the inspiring force in the art of war, where swords and scimitars were fashioned after its different patterns. The letter *lam* persisted in the imagination of the artists and architects till it found its fulfilment in the towers and monuments of Islam. On paper they both combined to culminate in the exquisite execution of *Tughras*. This was the height of "compressed" calligraphy.

In its earlier stages it were the Arabs who

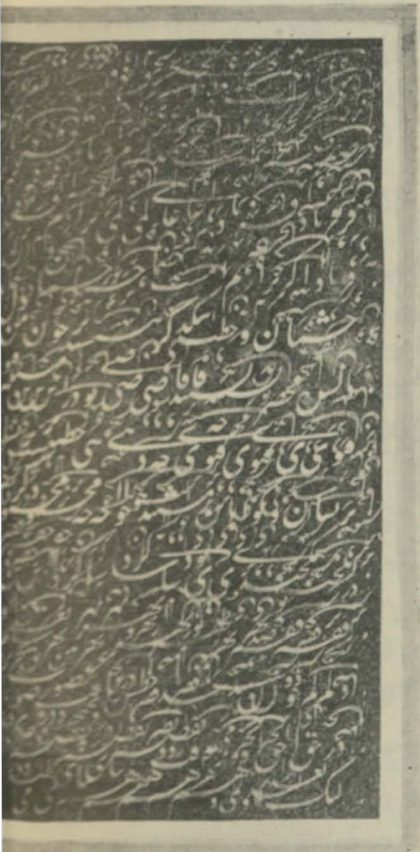
practised the art of calligraphy, while it received its highest fulfilment in the hands of the Persians, the Turks and the Indians. Innumerable styles of writing were developed up to the time of the Abbasids. From the Kufic to the Naskh, and on to Nasta'liq it developed in a dozen other forms. There has been no further development after the last style, and I feel there is no likelihood of another developing in these days of typewriting and printing.

In this short paper I will not deal with the history and development of this art. I have a few specimens of rare calligraphy to demonstrate and show how the calligraphists used to practise their art. There are seven specimens of calligraphy being reproduced here for the readers to ponder. I shall give a brief description of each to explain my point of view. It will show how the calligraphists used to show their skill in the practice of strokes and curves. These seven specimens pertain to the Nasta'liq style of writing. I have not come across any practice-writing in the Naskh style. May be some day someone is able to throw some light on this hidden aspect of calligraphy.

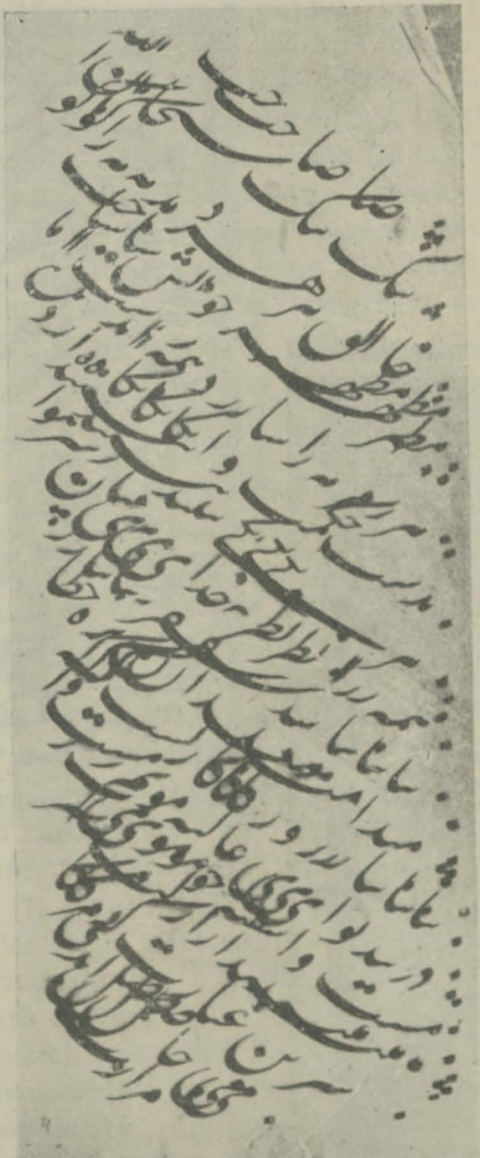
There are two main types of Arabic writing, namely, (1) Kufic and (2) Naskh. The Kufic type is an angular type of writing while the Naskh style is cursive and rounded. During the second half of the eighteenth century A.D., a style of writing developed in Iran which was called *Ta'liq*. This style tended to slope downwards from right to left, and met with great popularity all over the Muslim world. It continued to progress side by side with the other styles, till Mīr 'Ali Tabrizi combined the *Naskh* and the *Ta'liq* styles to produce the *Nasta'liq* style of



Picture No. 2



Picture No. 1



Picture No. 3

writing. In this new style the "curves develop into most sensual forms—either round and supple like the crescent, or smooth and oval like an egg." Its strokes are long and sharply or bluntly pointed in the form of a straight sword or a scimitar. In it the strokes flow easily, either straight or horizontally or with a slight gradually increasing bend towards the middle in the manner of a sword (Picture No. 1). This *Qit'ah* is from the pen of an unknown calligrapher of no mean order. In this you will see all the forms of a circle and other types of strokes beautifully illustrated. The calligrapher has also adopted the unique method of writing in the manner of a "Plough," in which the writing alternatively appears in lines written in opposite directions, and makes it look as if each letter falls into the bosom of the letter opposite. The symmetry in each line is thus not interfered with. The strokes are spread out as if, like swords, striking in the bellies of the curves. I regret I have been unable to identify the calligrapher, but from his style and standard of writing he appears to be a master of his art. I would not be surprised if he turned out to be the great master Mir 'Imad, for I discovered this *Qit'ah* lying atop another (Picture No. 2) in the same shop in Meshed which is signed by Mir 'Imad. Except that this writing is more bold than the one you have just seen in Picture No. 1, the style of writing, the curves and the strokes are very much similar to the one you have already seen.

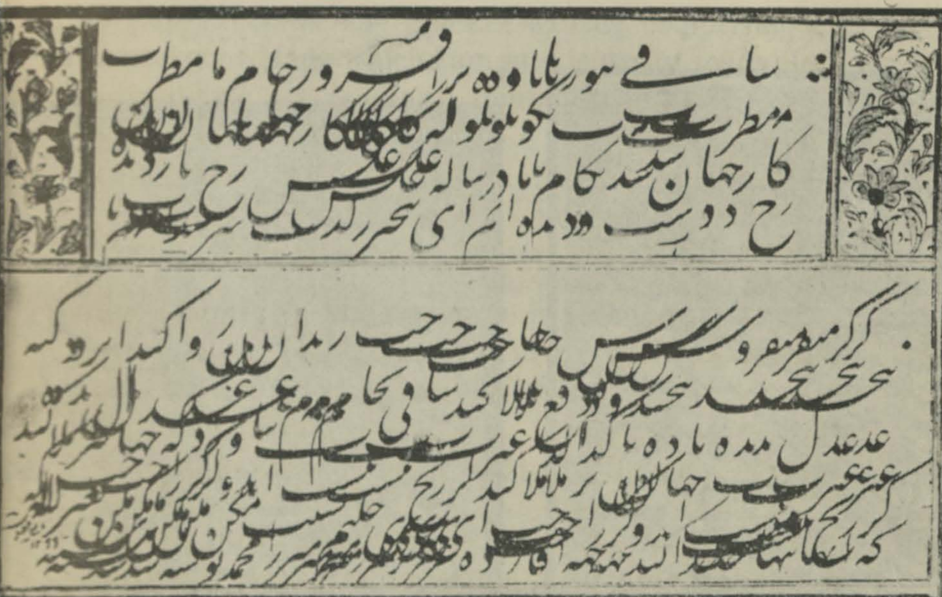
Picture No. 3 is another specimen of practice-writing which is again unsigned, but from the pen of a master. There is one striking peculiarity in this practice-writing, and that is the repetition of words

and letters in different manners and moods so as to present various forms of expression in that particular style. This practice-writing should not be taken as an aimless scribble. The writing has a sequence and makes sense. But it takes practice and a good deal of labour to decipher what the calligraphist has written. This will be more apparent from Picture No. 4.

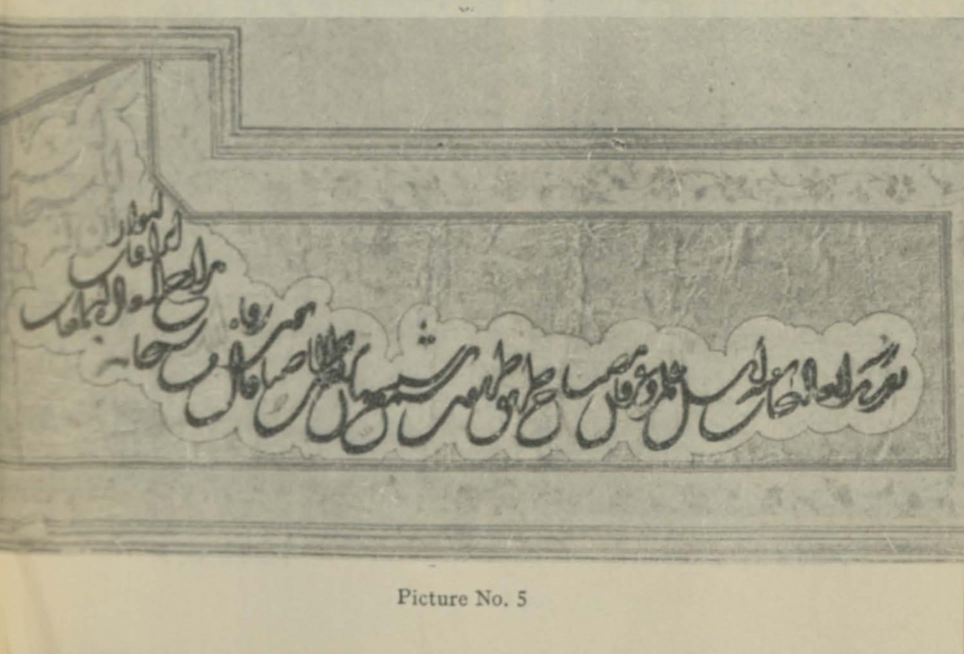
As I have said, all these pictures are practice-writing of great calligraphists. The artist while practising is creating different moods and patterns, thus covering the entire range of possibilities in which he can mould the words. Look at the bottom third of Picture No. 2, and see the words ضعیفیم (Dha'ifaim), عشقم (Ishqam) and مسلمان (Mussalman). You will find it variously written. Similarly, every word is written in a difierent style. This was real practice what they called مشق (Mashq). Going back to Picture No. 1, look into each line carefully. You will again find several words written in different styles. I would particularly draw your attention to the central bold lines, written in white ink, in Picture No. 1, which end with the words Khwajah Mahmud. How beautifully the variants have been brought out!

To further illustrate my point, now look at Picture No. 4, which is an autographed *Qit'ah* of Mirza Muhammad. Incidentally, very little is found about this calligraphist in books on calligraphy. A small mention is, however, found in *Tadhkirat al-Khattatan* of Hidayatullah. It says :

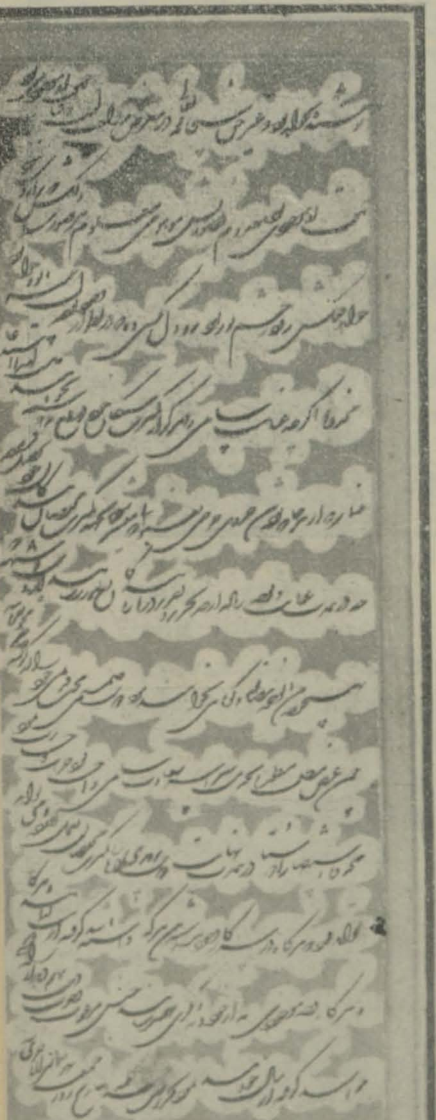
میرزا محمد شیرازی نسب بمیرزا کوچک وصال رساند و نستعلیق را نیکو نگارد و شعر نیز گوید و تخلص داوری گذارد (۱۲۹۰ هجری) -



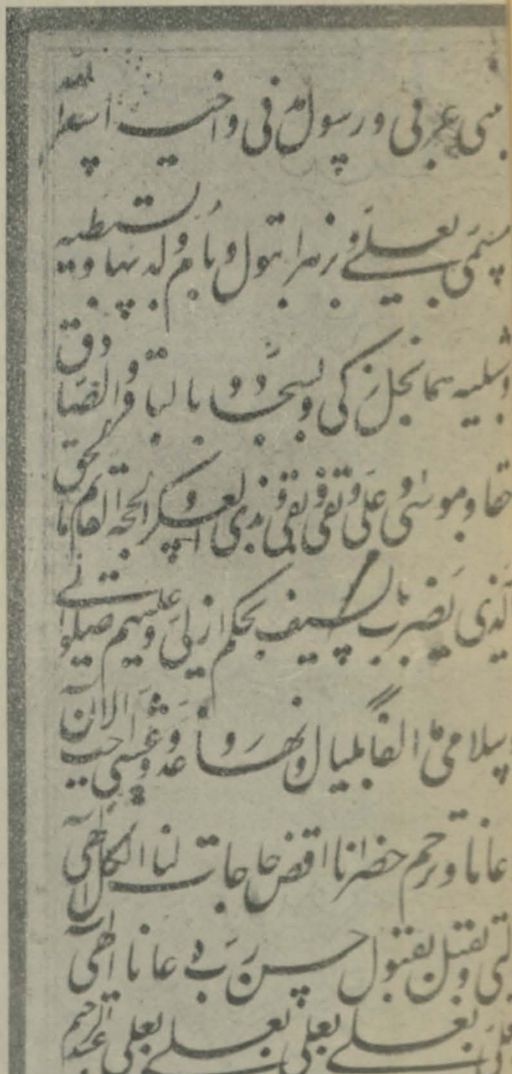
Picture No. 4



Picture No. 5



Picture No. 6



Picture No. 7

The picture shows the practice-writing comprising a few verses of Hafiz which I am sure is easily readable. To facilitate its reading I reproduce it here. In its upper half, it reads as follows :

ساقی بنور باده بر افروز جام ما   مطرب بگو که کار جهان شد بکام ما

ما در پیاله عکس رخ یار دیده ایم   اے بے خبر ز لذت شرب مدام ما

Watch carefully the variants in this *Qit'ah*. Notice the word مطرب (Mutrab); how many variants it has! At the bottom in the lower half of the *Qit'ah*, it reads thus :

گر میفروش حاجت رندان روا کند   ایزد گنه ببخشد و دفع بلا کند

ساقی بجام عدل بده باده تا گدا   غیرت نیاورد که جهان بر بلا کند

Look at the word میفروش (Maifarush) or حاجت (Hajat) or ببخشد (Bebakhshad). There are four styles in each word. The fifth one was perhaps not possible !

Another style of writing in Nasta'liq is the زلف عروس (Zulf-i 'Arus) or the "Locks of the Bride." It is also a decorative style. Actually under the Nasta'liq style of writing innumerable styles have developed, amongst which is one called *Shakastah*. This Shakastah or the broken style of writing is again of different types. Zulf-i 'Arus is one of the Shakastah styles of writing, the other being شکستہ آمیز (Shakastah Amiz). However, I am dealing with the Zulf-i 'Arus here. Its strokes are interlocked and curve upward in a thick manner thinning out gradually, usually in a rising fashion. They ascend slantingly, as in Picture No. 5.

Picture No. 6 shows the Shakastah Amiz style of Nasta'liq writing. The calligraphist shows a free flow of his pen by joining words and letters in the

most original manner. There is a subtle flourish in his strokes. The end of the line here also is always ascending. He rarely uses dots, except for decoration. This makes the reading difficult. He omits the dots deliberately to keep the continuity of his flow, and rarely stops to annotate the writing with dots or other diacritical signs. This *Qit'ah* is also the work of a master. Unfortunately, it is not signed, although dated.

Picture No. 7 is clear-cut specimen of Nasta'liq style of writing which is flawless. This is signed by 'Abdur Rahim. He is no less a person than 'Abdur Rahim al-Jaziri Ispahani, the master calligraphist, who decorated the porticos of Madrassah Chahar Bagh in Ispahan with his writing. He is not to be confused with 'Abdur Rahim 'Anbarin Qalam, the court calligraphist of Emperor Jahangir. This *Qit'ah* will enable the readers to assess the beauty of Nasta'liq and compare its beauty with that of the Shakastah style.

All the *Qit'ahs* reproduced here are from the personal collection of the writer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Annamarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1963, p. 89.
2. Zia-ud-Din, *Moslem Calligraphy*, Santiniketin Press, India, 1936, p. 65.
3. Hidayatullah, *Tadhkirat al-Khattatan*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1910, p. 54.
4. M.S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Muhammadan Art*, Heartsdale House, New York, 1947.

Three Unpublished Pictures of Riza-i 'Abbasi, The Court Painter of Shah 'Abbas The Great, and The Controversy About His Personality

Introduction

THERE are three contemporary painters-cum-calligraphists of the period of Shah 'Abbas the Great about whom certain confusion in identification has arisen due to the similarity of their names and profession. They are (1) Aqa Riza, (2) Riza-i 'Abbasi and (3) 'Ali Riza. Of these three, the first, Aqa Riza, was a painter and calligraphist, the second, Riza-i 'Abbasi, was purely a painter, and the third, 'Ali Riza, was a calligraphist. Out of the three again, it was Aqa Riza who went over to India and served in the courts of Akbar the Great and Emperor Jahangir.

According to *'Alam Ara-i 'Abbasi*,[1] they belonged to Kashan, while Jahangir in his *Tuzk*[2] mentions them as hailing from Herat. 'Ali Riza was from Tabriz, and is commonly known as 'Ali Riza 'Abbasi Tabrizi. Riza-i 'Abbasi, the artist under discussion, came from Meshed, according to my presumption. He is known through several of his signed paintings which are scattered over many museums of the world, such as the Boston, Louvre, Bibliotheque Nationale, Tehran and the Metropolitan. His paintings are

signed in two different ways, viz. Riza and Riza-i 'Abbasi. Paintings found signed as Aqa Riza do not belong to him, but to Aqa Riza, the son of 'Ali Asghar who went over to India and was also a calligraphist. We shall here discuss all these points in some detail. The pictures signed as Riza by Riza-i 'Abbasi are his earlier pictures, before he became associated with the court of Shah 'Abbas the Great, after whom he adopted the title of 'Abbasi.

My revered friend, Dr. Muhammad 'Abdullah Chaghtai, was the first to publish a learned article in the *Islamic Culture*,[3] and made an excellent attempt to remove the misunderstanding and confusion about the personalities of these three artists. I shall often be referring to his scholarly dissertation while discussing my thesis. Since the publication of his article, however, some hitherto unpublished facts have recently come to light, which both clarify and add to the confusion. My real purpose in writing this article is to introduce to my readers three pictures of Riza-i 'Abbasi reproduced here. In an attempt to do this I found myself entangled in this "eternal triangle" and, in an effort to disentangle myself, I covered a new field on the subject, which I thought may help to further clarify the subject. The following is the result of my research.

The Life and Art of Riza-i 'Abbasi

In a book recently published in Iran, entitled *Karnameh Buzurgan-i Iran* (کارنامهٔ بزرگان ایران),[4] it is stated:

بر زندگانی رضاء عباسی برخلاف معاصرینش که کم و بیش در تواریخ نامی از آنان ذکر شده ، هیچ روشن نیست -



Picture No. 1.

Man scratchinhahadd,tsgedie 1007 A.H. Signed as Riza.

(*Facing page 56*)

Rendered into English it means: "In contrast to his contemporaries whose life is available in the books of history there is nothing to be found about the life of Riza-i 'Abbasi." The word معاصرینش (his contemporaries) here probably means the other artists mentioned above, whose names are very similar. The period in which Riza-i 'Abbasi lived has also been given variously by different writers. But one thing is certain that he lived during the lifetime of Shah 'Abbas the Great. M. S. Dimand fixes this date between 1587 and 1628 A.D. This corresponds to 996-1038 A.H. This gives him a life-span of 42 years. According to *Karnameh Buzurgan-i Iran* his period is given as lying between the years 995 and 1038 A.H. This gives him an age of 43 years. I am inclined to doubt this statement and feel that our artist lived for a longer period of life. This is evident from the date of his signature under his writing on Picture No. 1, which says:

در مشهد مقدس آخر روز جمعه دهم محرم الحرام در دولت خانه
در خدمت یاران ساخته شد - راقم رضاء ۱۰۰۷ خصوصاً حاجی میرزا
غراجسگی سلمه اله -

["On last Friday, the 10th of Muharram, this picture was drawn in the State House, in the company of friends. Raqam Riza 1007. Specially (?) Haji Mirza Gharajasghi (?)."]

It will be noticed that he has signed his name as Riza only. If he was born in the year 995/996 A.H., then it would mean that our artist at the time of drawing this picture was hardly 11/12! This does not seem probable for the following reasons:

(1) It is rather too young an age to produce such a mature work of art.

(2) The writing on the side reproduced above also appears mature for that age.

(3) This picture was made in the company of a few intimate friends, and was necessarily drawn in a short time. Also it is not a posed picture obviously, and, therefore, could not have taken a long time. There is humour about the picture, which is very subtle ; the mood has been caught spontaneously. This shows a great mastery of the art which is inconceivable at the age of 11/12 years.

(4) The picture depicts one Haji Mirza Gharajasghi (?) whom I have been unable to identify. He is shown as a bald-headed middle-aged bearded man. Obviously he was an intimate friend of the artist, for he says so in the marginal writing. And if it be true that he painted this picture at the small age of 11/12 years, it is very unlikely that he had friends much older than himself. The bald head gives the figure an elderly appearance. The age of this gentleman is likely to be between 25 and 35 years. The phrase در خدمت یاران شد [drawn in the company of friends] is very significant and shows that the company in which this picture was drawn was of intimate friends and not just casual acquaintances. They must have been at least of the same group.

It will be further seen from this picture that the signature is dated 1007. Now, these were tumultuous days, as we learn from the "Life of Shah 'Abbas the Great." It says :

در ۱۰۰۶ بار دیگر عبدالمومن از بک مشهد را گرفته بسیاری
از اهالی شهر را کشته و خرابان را متصرف شد و خود در این مبال
در ماوراء النهر بجای پدرش عبدالله خان از بک نشست و از بد

رفتاریهای خود بقتل رسید و تا ۱۰۰۸ شر ازبکان از خراسان رفع نشد ـ

["In 1006 'Abdul Momin Uzbek captured Meshed for the second time, and killed a lot of inhabitants of that place, thus occupying Khurasan. In this very year he went and sat in the place of his father 'Abdullah Khan Uzbek in Transoxania. On account of his misdeeds he was murdered and till 1008 the evil cast by the Uzbeks did not clear off from Khurasan."]

Riza-i 'Abbasi till then was known only as Riza ! These were the earliest pictures of Riza-i 'Abbasi and much before the time he was actually introduccd into the court of Shah 'Abbas. Before I proceed any further I must make one point clear and draw attention of my learned readers to an article by Dr. Mehdi Behrami on Riza-i 'Abbasi which was published in the well-known journal, now defunct, آئنده (*Ayendeh*), Vol. III, No. 13. Besides other things which he has confused, I will point out one glaring slip, and that is Aqa Riza the painter-cum-calligraphist who went over to India never called himself nor has he ever been known as Aqa Riza 'Abbasi. He was known just as Aqa Riza. From the following passage in his writing, Dr. Behrami seems to have retained Aqa Riza in Iran till 1020, whereas actually he was in India from the time of Akbar the Great ! Now read the following passage :

مدت کار آقا رضا را از روی قطعات تاریخ وار او میتوان در بین ۱۰۰۷ و ۱۰۳۳ هجری تعین کرد و یکے از کارهائے زیبای او امروز در موزه تهران مشاهده میشود ـ شاید نخست در مشهد بسر میبرد و تا پیش از ۱۰۲۰ بدربار شاه عباس تقربی حاصل نه کرده است و در آغاز امر فقط بنام رضا اکتفا می نموده ـ

["The period of his life-work as found from the chronograms seems to stretch from 1007 to 1044 A.H. One of his masterpieces is in the Tehran Museum. Probably he first of all settled down in Meshed, as before the year 1020 he did not have access to the court of Shah 'Abbas, and, therefore, in the beginning he was content with just Riza as his name."]

Then again he says :

سر آمد هنرمندان اصفهان در آن وقت آقا رضا بوده که لقب عباسی را از نام شاه عباس بزرگ گرفته ـ

["One of the top most artists of that time in Ispahan was Aqa Riza who had adopted the title of 'Abbasi after the name of Shah 'Abbas the Great."]

Now, from the above two quotations it will have become evident that :

(1) Aqa Riza also used the title 'Abbasi.

(2) The title 'Abbasi was adopted after 1020 A.H.

(3) The title was after the Emperor's name.

This is not correct, because : (*a*) Aqa Riza did not call himself by the title 'Abbasi. He had no reason to do so. He was not in the good books of Shah 'Abbas the Great, and had fled to India, as will be presently shown. (*b*) Aqa Riza was not in Iran in 1020. He was in India during the time of Akbar the Great. It is, therefore, Riza-i 'Abbasi who signed his name as Riza-i 'Abbasi on his pictures, but never as Aqa Riza. Picture No. 1 reproduced here was drawn in 1007 and the place of its drawing was Meshed. These two things are established from this picture in favour of Riza-i 'Abbasi.

The period of Shah Abbas's reign is also 985-1038 A.H., which approximates with the period of

Riza-i 'Abbasi which we have estimated. Shah 'Abbas the Great, like Emperor Jahangir, was also an artist himself. Painting was his pastime. The art of Riza-i 'Abbasi at this time had developed to a great height and he was attracting the attention of connoisseurs. His drawings were truly representative of the following attribute : "In human drawing of calligraphist nature lines are suggestive of a joyous play of the moulding outlines of the human body. Without taking the help of the shades, a line gradually growing to a suitable breadth towards the centre, in the form of a muscle fibre, suggests the roundness of a limb and seems to be full with the property of life." Just ponder over these words and look at Picture No. 1 again, and the other two reproduced here. You will find the truth in this statement depicted in his pictures.

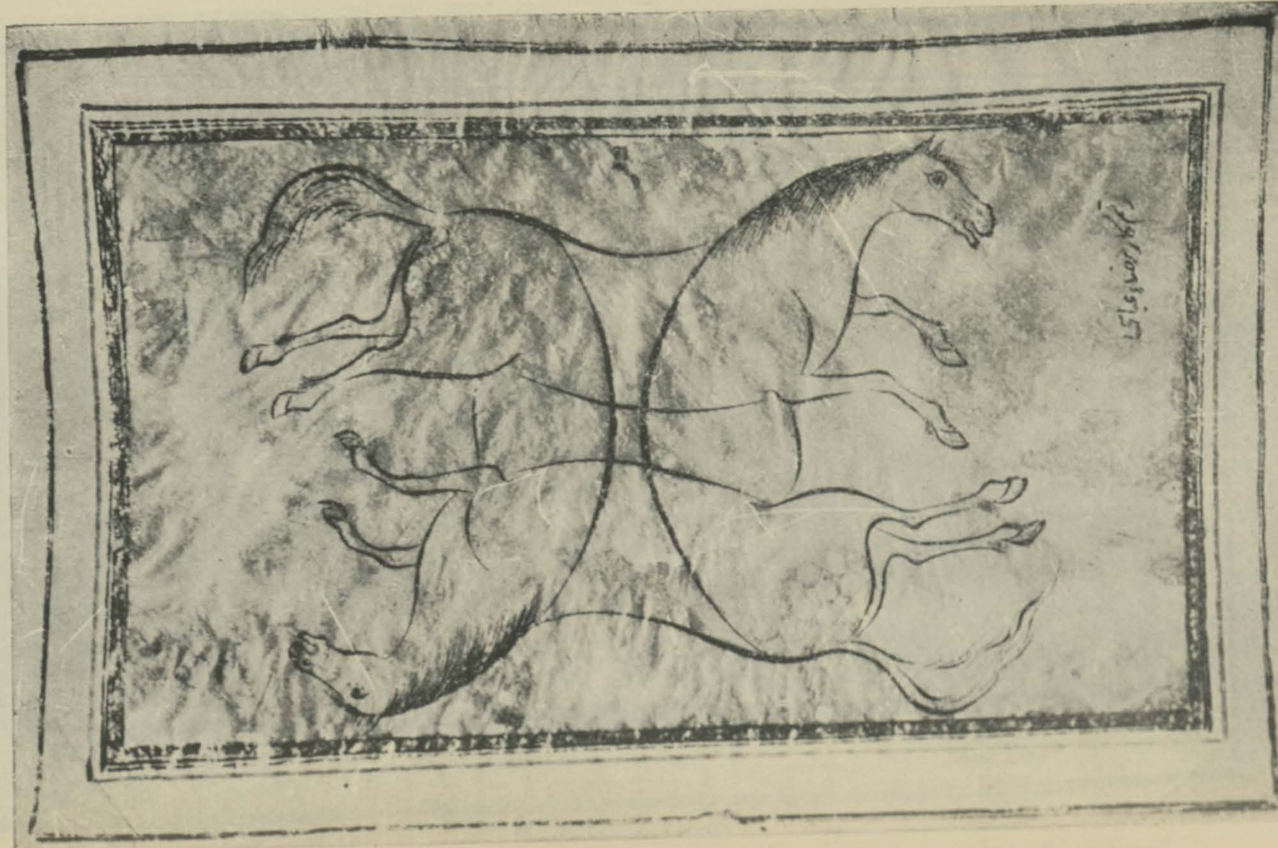
Riza-i 'Abbasi had attained such a fame that many an artist who came afterwards adopted the title 'Abbasi after him. As an instance may be cited the name of Shafi' 'Abbasi. Dr. M. A. Chaghtai suspects him to be the son of Riza-i 'Abbasi, but I have not come across any evidence in support of it. Dr. Chaghtai, however, thinks correctly that "his style clearly bears a Western influence." I feel that Riza-i 'Abbasi was the only person after Maulana Shaikh Muhammad Sabzwari to have popularised in Iran the style of painting after the Western manner. From the dates given above of the period of Riza-i 'Abbasi's life, I am inclined to stretch it back by another ten years and make it 985-1038, and not 995-1038 A.H. This would make him twenty-two years of age in the year 1007 when he painted Picture No. 1.

A few words more about the art of Riza-i 'Abbasi. Look at Picture No. 1 again. The posture of the

scratching left hand and the expression on the face are superb and meaningful. The main peculiarity of this drawing is that it is rendered in a calligraphic manner consisting of sure undulating curves combined with short curves.

Look now at Picture No. 2. You will find four horses with two faces! They are drawn in such a manner so as to look four. The lines and the strokes are so exquisite that they give a postural excellence to each pose. Except for the long back lines the rest of them are short. The two heads have been joined together in such a way that it gives the appearance of two stretched horses and two bending ones. The two fully stretched horses are in a galloping mood, while the two bending horses are in a drinking posture. The figure in each is perfect, and there is no break in the anatomy of the animals. Except for the two long strokes the rest of them are small and short. The calligraphic strokes are alternatively thick and thin in places, thus giving an appropriate shape to the muscles in action. It must not be construed from my statement that because his strokes are calligraphic, therefore, he was the calligraphist Aqa Riza or 'Ali Riza! Not the least. But this is the peculiarity and beauty of Riza-i 'Abbasi's art of drawing.

Riza-i 'Abbasi's influence has been found in many works of art in Iran. The Chihil Sutun or the "Hall of Forty Pillars" in Ispahan, and the garden pavilion Ala Kapi or the "Sublime Portel" have been decorated in his style. Figures of Europeans have been introduced into these decorations! Many of the miniatures found in the *Shah Nameh* manuscripts reveal the influence of Riza-i 'Abbasi and 'Ali Riza Tabrizi,



Picture No. 2.—Four horses with two heads. Signed Raqam Kar Riza-i 'Abbasi, undated.

(Facing page 62)



Picture No. 3.—The Sheep and the Shepherd. Signed Raqam Kar Riza-i 'Abbasi, undated.

(*Facing page 80*)

while commenting on the art of these manuscripts. M. S. Dimand falls into this category. However, he is quite convinced about the artistic excellence of Riza-i 'Abbasi, and admits that his drawings are life-like: "His genre scenes and portraits are characterised by close observation of life." Look now at Picture No. 3. Pictures No. 1 and 3 are amply illustrative of this description. The third picture shows a humorous but relaxing attitude of a sheep-owner, who has let loose his sheep in order to relax himself nearby. A further humorous touch has been given to the picture by placing a turban on the head of the sheep. The sheep itself is a peculiar combination of a cow and a sheep, as would appear from the hoofs and the legs, the neck and the fat tail of the animal. Even the face is a mixed one. I would not be surprised if this picture is a sort of a cartoon drawn in lighter vein! Pictures No. 2 and 3 are drawn on the peritoneum of a deer and hence look shrivelled.

Controversy of Signatures

All the three pictures are signed. Pictures with signatures are also reporduced in other books of Persian art, and in reproductions in learned dissertations. Three types of signatures are found, e.g. (*a*) Riza, (*b*) Riza-i 'Abbasi, and (*c*) Aqa Riza. Let me first discuss the signatures on the pictures reproduced here, as they have so far remained unpublished. The peculiarity of the signature of Riza-i 'Abbasi is that he is in the habit of joining the R with Z (رضا). This is clearly discernible in Picture No. 1. In Pictures No. 2 and 3, although they are not exactly joined, one can see they are in the process of joining. In figure 29 on page 54 of his book, M. S. Dimand

has reproduced two pictures of the artist which are both signed. On both the pictures, the artist has signed as follows : رقم کمینه رضاء عباسے , which means "drawn by the humble Riza-i 'Abbasi." In Pictures No. 2 and 3 reproduced here, he has signed as رقم کار رضاء عباسے which again means "drawn by Riza-i 'Abbasi" or the "work of Riza-i 'Abbasi." Now, on page 523 of the *Karnameh Buzurgan-i-Iran* a miniature of Riza-i 'Abbasi has also been reproduced. Here also he signed as رقم کمینه رضاء عباسے . The name Riza, in Picture No. 1, in the pictures reproduced by Dimand and in the one just mentioned from *Karnameh Buzurgan-i Iran* is written in exactly the same manner and is absolutely identical. Dr. M. A. Chaghtai in his article mentioned above has also reproduced two miniatures : one signed as آقا رضاء and the other as رقم کمینه رضاء عباسے . The picture of Aqa Riza is that of a mystic. In this the word "Riza" is signed in an entirely different manner, the R and Z being distinctly separate. The second picture of a "Youth Reading" bears a signature which is identical with the signature of Riza-i 'Abbasi which I have demonstrated above.

The influence of Riza-i 'Abbasi on the Iranian paintings, as I have mentioned above, has been considerable, especially during the two centuries which followed him. We find that he was being imitated by eminent painters like Yusuf, Kassim and Mu'in. D. Barnett of the British Museum says, "His dominating influence, especially in living drawings, which is often most charming and expressive, lasted right through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."

I would like here to devote a few more words to the other two artists, viz. Aqa Riza and 'Ali Riza.

'Ali Riza, I have stated above, was a calligraphist and remained in Iran all his life, while Aqa Riza, besides being a painter, also dabbled in calligraphy. 'Ali Riza came from Tabriz. He was a master of Nasta'liq style of writing, and was also quite at home with Naskh. It was he who decorated the "Ala Kapi" with his magnificent calligraphy. He also decorated the interior of the dome of Lutfullah Mosque in Ispahan. His decoration of the Masjid-i Shah in Ispahan bears the date 1025 A.H. His life is traceable only up to the year 1038 A.H. The date of his death is not known.

Aqa Riza is the figure upon whom *'Alam Ara-i 'Abbasi* has dwelt at some length. According to him he hailed from Kashan. But Jahangir in his *Tuzk* states that he came from Herat. It is probable that when he came to India he may have been at the time of his departure staying at Herat. It is worthwhile quoting fully from *'Alam Ara-i 'Abbasi*, and then analyse for a while the implication of his statement. He says :

مولانا اصغر علی کاشی استاد بیقرینه و مصور پاکیزه ساخت در پرداخت و رنگ آمیزی منفرد و درکوه پردازی و درخت سازی از اقران در پیش بود او نیز در خدمت سلطان ابراهیم میرزا می بود - در زمان میرزا اسمعیل از اصحاب کتاب خانه شد پسرش آقا رضا در فن تصویر و یکه و صورت چهره‌کشائی ترقی عظیم کرده عجوبه زمان گشت و در این عصر و زمان مسلم الثبوت است از جهات نفس بآن نزاکت قلم همیشه زور آزمائی، ورزش، کشتی‌گیری کرده از شیوه محفوظ بودی و از صحبت ارباب استعداد کناره جسته بآن طبقه الفت داشتی و در این عهد فی الجمله از آن هر زه در آئی

باز آمده اما متوجه کار کمتر میشود او نیز بطریق صادق بیگ
بد مزاج، تنک حوصله سپرد اختلاط است. الحق استغنائی در طبیعتش
هست در خدمت حضرت اعلیٰ ظل الٰهی مورد عواطف گزید و
رعایتهای کلی یافت اما از اطوار ناهنجار صاحب اعتبار نشدو همیشه
مفلس و پریشان حال است۔

["Maulana 'Ali Asghar of Kashan was an incomparable master and an accomplished painter ; as an artist and colourist he was unique and unsurpassed by his contemporaries in drawings of streets and trees. He also took service with Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, and in the time of Isma'il Mirza was on the staff of the Library. His son, Aqa Riza, became the marvel of the age in the art of painting and unequalled in those days. In spite of the delicacy of his touch, he was so uncultured that he constantly engaged in athletic practices and wrestling and became infatuated with such habits. He avoided the society of men of talents, and gave himself up to the association of such low persons. At the present time he has repented for such idle frivolity a little, but he pays very little attention to his art, and like Sadiq Beg he has become ill-tempered, peevish and unsocial. In the service of His Majesty, the Shadow of God, he has been the recipient of favours and considerations, but on account of his evil ways he has not taken warning and consequently he is always poor and in distress."]

To me it appears that his poverty and degradation in the eyes of Shah 'Abbas was the cause of his leaving the court of Iran and seeking his fortunes elsewhere in India. This had happened before 1014 A.H., which is the date of Akbar the Great, for he arrived with his son during the liefetime of Akbar.

It is stated in the *Karnameh Buzurgan-i Iran* :

بالآخر بار سفر بسته به هندوستان رفت و بخدمت ''جلال الدین
اکبر'' پیوست و پس از سالی چند که اکبر وفات یافت ''جهانگیر
پادشاه'' (۱۰۱۴-۱۰۳۷) ویرا مشمول عنایت و التفات فرمود و
او و پسرش ''ابوالحسن'' که در نقاش تربیت عظیم کرد در خدمت
این پادشاه نوازش بسیار یافتند ـ ـ ـ وهم در هندوستان این پدر و
پسر وفات یافتند ـ

["At last he proceeded on a travel to India and got himself attached to the court of Jalal-ud-Din Akbar. And after some years when Akbar had died, Jahangir Padshah (1014-1037) turned a benevolent eye on him. And he and his son Abul Hasan who was a well-trained artist were well rewarded in the service of this king . . . . And the father and the son died in India and were buried there."]

From the above two accounts it will have become clear that it was Aqa Riza who came to India and not Riza-i 'Abbasi. Further, Riza-i 'Abbasi became associated with the court of Shah 'Abbas after which he called himself by the name of 'Abbasi. Aqa Riza did not do so.

Portrait of Riza-i 'Abbasi

Dr. M.A. Chaghtai, in his learned article referred to above, says: "There exist three portraits of Riza-i 'Abbasi the painter by his pupil Mu'in Musawwar, made on different occasions, and at the request of different persons, as we learn from the inscriptions which they bear; they are all dated between 1084 and 1087 A.H."

I reproduce here one of those portraits. See

Picture No. 4. It has been taken from the article of Dr. Behrami referred to above. My reading of the inscription slightly varies from that of Dr. Chaghtai's. This is how I read it :

شبیه مرحمت و مغفرت «پناهی مرحومی» جنت «مکانی» استادم
رضا مصوری عباسی رحمة الله و الغفران بتاریخ سنه «۱۰۳۰ تقال شده
بود و بتاریخ پنجم شهر صفر» - - - - سنه ۱۰۸۷ «بیادگار جهت» مرقع
باتمام رسید مبارک باد «شقه» معین مصور غفرالله زنوبه -

The version of Dr. Chaghtai runs as follows :

شبیه مرحمت و مغفرت «پناهی مرحوم» جنت «مکان» استادم
رضا مصور عباسی علیه الرحمة و الغفران بتاریخ ۱۰۳۳ - - - ۱۰۸۷
«بیاد گار بجهت» مرقع با تمام رسید مبارک باد «مشقه» معین مصور
غفرالله زنوبه -

Variations have been marked by lines. It is apparent that Mu'in started this picture in the lifetime of Riza-i 'Abbasi, but completed it at a much later date. Mu'in himself lived long after Riza, and in a picture of his preserved in the Tehran Museum, we find that he completed it in the year 1097 A.H. His works are also available which are dated 1110 A.H.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Iskander Beg Turkoman, *'Alam Ara-i 'Abbasi*, Tehran, 1314 A.H.
2. *Tuzk-i Jahangiri*, translation by Rogers and Beverage, London, 1909.
3. Dr. M.A. Chaghtai, "Aqa Riza—'Ali Riza—Riza-i 'Abbasi," *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad Deccan, Vol. XII, October 1958.



Picture No. 4.—Portrait of the Painter Riza-i 'Abbasi by Mu'in.

(*Facing page 83*)

4. *Karnameh Buzurgan-i Iran*, Department of Publications, Tehran, 1340 Shamsi.

5. M.S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Muhammadan Art*, Heartsdale House, New York, 1947.

6. Abu al-Kassim Sahab, *Tarikh-o Zindgi Shah 'Abbas Kabir*, Tehran, 1925 Shamsi.

7. *Ayendeh* ("آینده"), Vol. III, No. 13, article on Riza-i 'Abbasi by Dr. Mehdi Behrami.

8. M. Zia-ud-Din, *Moslem Calligraphy*, Santiniketan Press, India, 1936.

9. D. Barnett, "Islamic Art in Persia," *The Legacy of Persia*, Oxford, 1953.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Department of Archaeology for the loan of References No. 2 and 3, and to Pir Hissam-ud-Din Rashidi for the loan of Reference No. 1, without which it would not have been possible to present this paper.





Unique Islamic Coin.

A UNIQUE ISLAMIC COIN

MY modest collection of coins comprises a few specimens each of the Greek, the Sassanian, the Indian, and the Muslim pieces. I have collected them during the course of my travels. What has fascinated me most is the design selected by each civilisation : and further, what has amazed me is the complete absence of figurative design on the early Muslim coins.

After the Roman and the Iranian civilizations the Muslims were the third great people to come up. They had before them a large variety of designs on the coins which were in circulation at the advent of Islam. But we find a sudden departure in the selection of the motif which was impressed on their coins. Jerusalem had fallen to the Muslims in 637 A.D. Iran had been subdued in 641 A.D. By 712 A.D. the Pyrenese had been passed. Much earlier Afghanistan and the Indus Valley, along with a good slice of Central Asia, had been conquered. Their outstanding successes in war had encouraged the race of new converts to trust in the assurances of the Holy Quran.

In 693 A.D., the first Umayyad Caliph Abd Al-Malik inaugurated the first Muslim coinage. For a number of years the captured Byzantine and Iranian treasuries had provided the Muslims with their currency. But they were soon exhausted, and the Muslims were compelled to issue their own coins to resume trade and commerce. The Muslim coins,

which started to appear bore no portraits in view of the prohibition to execute images. "Not only the unity of man was denied by the absence of portraits, but there is not even a mention of the Caliph's name, nor of the name of any other human being except for Prophet Muhammad himself, as the Prophet of One True God." The ruler's name was never mentioned, nor even the names of those over whom he ruled. "The coin ceases to have a localised nationality, but becomes the currency of the new theocracy of Allah upon earth." The name of the city in which the coin was struck is, of course, mentioned. Besides these three names no other name was mentioned on the early Muslim coins.

The Muslim coin is, therefore, a document of religious propaganda. This was to pass through the hand of every human subject throughout the Islamic Empire, be he a Muslim, a Jew or a Christian. These coins were declaring the name of Allah every time they passed through the hand of any one, just as the Muazzan called the faithful to prayers five times a day. "Could it be that the very currency itself contributed to the breakdown of loyalty of the Christians and the Zoroastrians to their ancestral faith ?"

After this brief introduction, I would now like to give a short account of the coin before me. It is a silver Dirham measuring 25 millimeters in diameter, which was minted in the reign of Caliph Hisham 723-742 A.D. He was a Caliph of the Umayyed dynasty. It was struck in the then flourishing city of Wasit, or the central city, which had been founded by Hajjaj on the bank of the River Tigris between Kufah and Basrah.

The obverse (Picture No. 1) bears the following inscription in the centre field :

"La Ilaha Illallahu Wahdahu La Sharika Lahu"

Translated into Eaglish, it means, "There is no god but Allah alone. There is no associate to Him."

This formula strikes at the very root of the Christian belief of Trinity, which was, as now, prevalent in Christiandom. It announced that all so-called gods are false and pronounced the Almightiness of Allah.

On the border of the obverse of this coin, we find the following inscription :

"Bismillahe Dharaba Hadha Dirthem Bi Wasiti Fi Sanah Thamanah Wa Asharina Wa Miata"

It means : "In the name of Allah : this dirthem was struck in Wasit in the year one hundred and twenty-eight."

Now this coin has seven rings round the border of its obverse side, and five rings on the reverse. In another coin of the same period in my collection, there are present only five rings on both the sides, and it is struck in Waist also, but six years earlier. It reads :

"Bi Wasiti Sanah Athnaten Wa Asharina wa Miata"

—which is the year 122 A.H.

Frankly speaking I do not understand the significance of these rings.

On the reverse (Picture No. 2) of these two coins we find a different writing, which is really the unitarian manifesto of the Holy Quran. This runs as follows :

CENTRE :

"Allau Ahhad, Allahus Samad, Lam Yalid Walam Ulad Walam Yakun Lahu Kufoan Ahad"

Translation : Allah is One. Allah is Eternal. He did not beget, nor was He begotten, and He has never had an equal.

This is indeed a militant manifesto intended to strike terror into the hearts of the infidels. It declares the unity of God most forcefully and again strikes at the basis of Trinity.

On the border of the reverse side the following lines are inscribed.

"Muhammadur Rasul Ullah Arsalahu Bilhuda Wadinilhaqqi Liyuzhirahu Aladdini Kullihi Wa Lou Karehal Mushrekun"

Translation : Muhammad is the apostle of Allah. He sent him with true guidance and the Religion of Truth, in order to make it triumphant over every other religion even though the polytheists disapprove.

The final declaration of the mission of Prophet Muhammad (OWBP) struck at the very root of non-Islamic belief, and prepared the ground for religious propagation of the ideology of Islam. It will thus be seen that the essentials of Islamic religion were compressed to cover the two sides of the coin and made to pass from hand to hand which would be read by all, who carried the currency with them. This served a much better purpose than the edicts on the carved rocks and pillars, of Darius and Asoka. People did not have to go to these rocks and pillars, to read the proclamations : the message came to them as a routine, circulating as fast as the economic needs of man. In the former case people did not

read the edicts till they travelled past these rocks and pillars, and perhaps forgot what they had read when they reached their destination. In the latter case, however, even the travellers, let alone the town dwellers, had to carry the currency in their pocket, and each time they took a piece out the writing on the coin stared in their face reminding them of the Almightiness of Allah and His Prophet. This was indeed a unique innovation of religious propagation. How different from the coins of the Islamic world of today. There are signs for those who can ponder.

On the border of the reverse side the [illegible] lines are inscribed.

"Muhammadur Rasul Ullah Arsalahu [illegible]
Wa-dinil-Haqqi Liyudhirahu Aladdini [illegible]
Wa Lou Karihal Mushrikun"

Translation : Muhammad is the apostle [illegible] He sent him with true guidance and the [illegible] Truth in order to make it triumphant [illegible] other religions even though the polytheists [illegible]

The final declaration of the [illegible] Muhammad (UWBP) struck at the [illegible] Islamic belief, and prepared the ground [illegible] propagation of the ideology of Islam [illegible] be seen that the [illegible] of Islamic [illegible] compressed to cover the two sides of the [illegible] made to pass from hand to hand [illegible] read by all, who carried the [illegible] This served a much better purpose than [illegible] on the curved rocks and pillars, as [illegible] People did not have to go to these [illegible] to read the proclamations [illegible] them as a routine circulating [illegible] needs of man. In the former case [illegible]



NILA GUMBAD

NILA GUMBAD

DURING the time of the Sikhs, the central part of Anarkali, which lies between the Shahrah-i-Quaid-i-Azam and the crossing from the Senate Hall to the Nila Gumbad, was occupied by the troops, and virtually formed the Cantonment of Lahore.

They had their ordnance dump in the mosque attached to the tomb of Abdul Razzak Sabzwari, who lies buried under the dome of Nila Gumbad. When the British took over they continued to station their troops in the same locality. Thus arose the market area around this place. The British Artillery was located here and the mosque formed the Artillery. Mess. Jamsetjee the wine merchant (wrongly called Jaman Jee by Chishti, is actually Jam Seth Jee and is a metathesical novelty of those days, which also saw another similar conversion in the name of Jam Khana into Gymkhana !) was located round the corner where Muhkam Din's Bakery now happens to be. There were other bakeries too in that area which served the troops. One of them was located adjacent to the United Publishers, which later came to be owned by Abdul Matin. In this shop a great scene was enacted in the later twenties. Abdul Matin single-handedly fired from within his house and fought against a company of troops. The roof of his house was torn apart and hot water was thrown down by the Fire Brigade !¡Old Lahorites will recollect the episode. Tollinton Market was also built in that period to serve the military and civil officials whose bungalows were located along the Lower Mall.

The Nila Gumbad monuments comprise two parts, namely, the mosque and the mausoleum of Abdul Razzak Makki Sabzwari. Very little is known about this holy man. Latif in his *History of Lahore* (Lahore, its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities) calls him a Ghaznivid Saint, "who came from Ghazni and settled in Lahore in the time of Hamayun." His full name is given as Abdul Razzak Makki of Sabzwar. Unfortunately no more details are available anywhere about his life.

The present mausoleum was built by his disciples. The dome was originally decorated with beautiful blue tiles which stood out prominently and were visible from a distance in those days with no tall buildings to obstruct the view. It took its name from these blue tiles which have now disappeared except for a couple of them. It is a great pity that the Archaeological and the Auqaf Departments have not taken any interest in renovating this tomb. A beautiful piece of architecture could become another attraction for the tourists. In Istanbul, Teheran, Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo similar domes situated along main streets are kept in trim and are a tourists' attraction. I have, however, unofficially learnt that a case was put up to the Central Government for finances but it is still pending. I feel its renovation would not cost much, as the tiles could be locally made and artisans employed to cover the dome. It is a pity that such structures of historical importance and architectural beauty are dwindling. The fate of Kamran's Baradari is before us, and there are many more of similar repute which are on their last leg, and will disappear with the next flood or earthquake! The location of Nila Gumbad is striking. It is

centrally situated, and with a shop demolished in front, it will project a magnificent view.

There are altogether seven graves under the dome, the details of which are not known, except for the main grave of the holiest of them which is larger than the rest. Such a grand structure however points to the prominence of the holy man in whose time the mosque was utilised as a renowned place of learning. Chishti records the names of several well-known scholars who taught there.

The mosque and the mausoleum were restored to the Muslims in 1856 A.D., according to Latif, and have since been looked after by the merchants of Anarkali, prominent of whom was Sheikh Muhammad Naqi, a landlord of the area. He was also responsible for restarting the Madrassah later on. The madrassah is very active today and is doing commendable work. Regular classes are being held and sermons delivered. Friday and Id prayers are held with great solemnity.

The dome was constructed quite sometime after the Saint was buried. Latif says : "The saint Mauj Darya Bokhari was seen in dream by the custodians of the shrine and it was intimated that a large dome should be constructed over the remains of Abdul Razzak. This was accordingly done." Another story is that a lion used to visit the grave at night and sweep the platform with his tale ! I am told by Wali Ullah Khan that such stories are also to be found in the Buddhist religious literature where lions are said to have come and swept the Stupas.

centrally situated, and with a shop demolished in front, it will present a magnificent view.

There are altogether seven graves under the dome, the details of which are not known, except for the main grave of the holiest of them which is larger than the rest. Such a grand structure however points to the preeminence of the holy man in whose time the mosque was attaining a renowned place of learning. Chishti records the names of several well-known scholars who taught there.

The mosque and the mausoleum were restored to the Muslims in 1856 A.D. according to Latif, and have since been looked after by the merchants of Amritsar, prominent of whom was Sheikh Muhammad Naqi, a landlord of the area. He was also responsible for restoring the Madrassah later on. The madrassah is very active today and is doing commendable work. Regular classes are being held and sermons delivered. Friday and Id prayers are held with great solemnity.

The dome was constructed quite sometime after the Saint was buried. Latif says: "The saint Mauj Darya Bokhari was seen in dream by the custodians of the shrine and it was intimated that a large dome should be constructed over the remains of Abdul Razzak. This was accordingly done." Another story goes that a lion used to visit the grave at night and sweep the platform with his tale! I am told by Wali Ullah Khan that such stories are also to be found in the Buddhist religious literature where lions are said to have come and swept the Stupas.

IRAN AS I KNOW IT

MY interest in Iran and the Iranian literature seems to have had very early roots in my life. The earliest recollection of such an impact goes back to the year 1918 when I was six years old. Our house was one of the literary centres in Lahore—specially during the winter months we used to have good gatherings when my maternal and paternal grandfathers came home on leave. Amongst those who attended these gatherings was the late Allama Sir Mohammad Iqbal, our national poet. On one such gathering I was sitting by the side of my paternal grandfather, when during the conversation he related a story about Emperor Jahangir and Noor Jehan. He narrated that one day this Royal couple was strolling in the garden, when looking at a cyprus tree, Jahangir recited a verse to Noor Jehan extemporaneously, saying :

سرو در باغ به یک پائے ستادست بنگر

which means: "Look, how the cyprus tree is standing on one leg." Noor Jehan who was equally clever with composing extempore poetry, retorted:

به رکابے تو دودگر بودش پائے دگر

meaning "that it would humbly follow at your majesty's heal if it had the second one".

There was a great applause and my grandfather explained to me the meaning of the verse. The story seems to have gone deep into my subconscious mind to sprout again in later days as a definite urge for the

Persian literature, and the Persian people. The impact of this story was so great that I seemed to have instantaneously memorised the verse. I now realise that this story was the cause of my interest in Persia and Persian literature. There may be many more factors, but this was the main impact in creating a thirst for everything Persian. This is my earliest recollection and with it must have arisen an unconscious desire to visit Persia.

Years went by, and I grew up; finished my schooling and college, and joined the Army during World War II. In the later half of 1941, I found myself landed in Iran. The fear of a bloody war was pleasantly replaced by the unexpected fulfilment of a dormant desire to visit Iran. The sound of bullets which had been resounding in my ears when I left India, was substituted by the pleasant experience of my arrival at Bandar Pehlavi on the Caspian Sea. Polish prisoners were coming from Russia and were to pass through Iran; they were to be fed, clothed, escorted and their sick looked after. And, as I belonged to the medical profession, I was selected as one of the half a dozen I. M. S. Officers to be stationed at the port of disembarkation which was Bandar Pehlavi. They were coming from Karsnovadak in Russia on the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea.

My journey to Bandar Pehlavi was most thrilling. I was in the north of Iraq getting ready to move with a Brigade to the battle front in the desert. One morning I was called by the Commander who told me to move to Teheran immediately. I was to proceed via Baghdad, Bassra and Ahwaz, from where I was to catch a train to Teheran. As I was already packed to move with the Brigade, I did not lose a

moment to get to the railway station to catch the first available train. Leaving Mosul in the morning, the next day, I was in Bassra; and there again without waiting to report to the transit camp, I hired a boat and crossed the Shattul Arab into the Iranian territory to drive to Ahwaz where I spent the night. Next morning I was on the train again. It was a long journey to Teheran, but the corridor train was comfortable and I was in good company ; the journey, although it was long, was very enjoyable. After 36 hours I had detrained in Teheran. This railway is a masterpiece of engineering. Some of the bridges over which the railway passes are amazingly constructed. The Qarun Railway Bridge near Ahwaz is a tremendous structure. There are lengthy tunnels burrowed through mightly hills.

I spent a hurried two days seeing a few places of interest in Teheran and in getting further orders to move. My friends in Teheran advised me not to spend more time in Teheran but move up quickly to Bandar Pehlavi which was a more peaceful place full of natural beauty and bracing climate.

I took the route via Bahulsar, Chalus, Ramsar and Rasht and after spending two days on the way I reached Bandar Pehlavi where I stayed for nine months. During this time I was travelling up and down the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, some time staying at Rasht and some time at Ramsar, Chalus and Babulsar and even going up to Qazvin from Rasht, but never getting to Teheran. The natural scenery of the surroundings of the Caspian Sea was enchanting. I made a lot of friends. The swim on the beach was a regular feature. Roaming in the Murdab and gathering fruits and flowers from

the floating gardens was a unique experience.

The work went on side by side. The Poles came and went, leaving behind their tale of woe. We kept behind to clear up their mess, but my stay afforded me a great opportunity to see the country and its people from very close quarters. Pehlavi is situated in the Province of Gilan and the Persian spoken here is called "Gilak". The spoken language is only a variation of the accent which differs from provice to province. Being close to Russia and Turkey, most of the people speak Russian and Turkish also.

My first impression of Iran was that it was a country of people with good manners and great tastes who were temperamentally constructive and artistic. I admired the spacious boulevards and khayabans interspersed with fountains and statues of celebrities. I used to wonder why such generosity had been shown in allotting space while planning streets and parks. Teheran was then a small town with a population of about 5,30,000. I only came to realise much later that the Great Raza Shah Pehlavi was a monarch of great foresight and had planned everything ahead to provide for the times to come. The very streets which I thought at first to be too wide, appeared to me too narrow for the huge traffic and exploding population which I saw ten years later in 1951. Raza Shah the Great was a master planner and great architect. He fully appreciated the future requirements of his country and had planned accordingly. The roads were just being built around the towns, but between the towns they were not good, except for the main roads which ran from Qasr-i Shirin through Karman Shah and Hamdan over the Pai-Tuq Pass to Teheran. But the road which ran

from Teheran to the Caspian Sea was excellent and the one which ran along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea was also excellent up to Rasht. Besides this there were no good roads. I had travelled to Tabriz and downward from Teheran to Qum, Ispahan and Shiraz and from there to Dorud and Barujard. All these roads were in a bad state. Hospitals were scanty and only rudimentary universities existed in Teheran, Shiraz and Meshad. Even the buildings of the Teheran University were not complete and there was only one good hospital in the Capital of Iran which was run by the Americans. The libraries and museums were not organised. The Gulistan Palace of course existed as it is today. The railway station had just been built. The Bank-i-Milli was in its old building. There was a big gap between Teheran and Shimran with the summer palace of the King intervening, and all around Teheran was a barren waste. With the moving in of troops, cabarets and night clubs had sprung up which flourished mostly on the American dollar and the British pound, but destroyed the economy of the country. Prices shot up and living for the common man became difficult. Shops were of course full in those days also, but the prices of commodities which I had seen while going up had risen ten times when I returned to Teheran after a year in 1942. However, signs of construction were visible everywhere but buildings lay half-finished and construction was suspended due to the incursion of foreign troops. I saw a beautiful small hospital building on the beach of Caspian Sea in Bandar Pehlavi which was lying unfinished and unoccupied. This was, however, completed and made use of and equipped to run a hospital for the Poles and the Persians. The basic planning

for the country which had been done by Raza Shah the Great was utilitarian. Unfortunately, he did not have the chance to see his projects completed but which his great and worthy son saw through.

The famous Pasteure's Institute in Teheran was founctioning but it was in its primitive form. This Institute today is one of the leading institutes of its kind in the world with a magnificent modern library and equipment, and is manufacturing all kinds of vaccines and sera. I have no hesitation in saving that we do not have the like of it in Pakistan.

I must mention one or two noticeable things I observed during my stay in Bandar Pehalvi before I return to other places. The most cherished memory is that of the Imperial Yacht which stays in the Caspian Sea. I understand it was built somewhere on the Continent and was brought through the Volga river. It is a luxury ship and is most tastefully constructed and decorated befitting of a ruling monarch. I have had the good fortune to be on it on a couple of occasions with special permission of the port authorities of Iran. The caviar factory is another important thing of note in Pehalvi. This is the only factory in the whole of the East. The other notable thing in that part of Iran is the Shah's summer palace at Ramsar.

After leaving Bandar Pehalvi one comes to the beautiful small town of Rasht. Rasht is famous for its gardens and beautiful people. It has also produced several notable poets, one of which was Makhfi Rashti. He has truly depicted this place in the following verse which says :

مخفیا دختران خطـه رشت همچو طاؤس رقص می گردد

Translation: "O Makhfi, thed aughters of the land of Rasht dance like the peacock does." I have wandered in its gardens and streets several times and sat in its informal cafes situated in small gardens to enjoy a chat with the local inhabitants.

RAMSAR PALACE

Passing on from Rasht we come to Ramsar as I have mentioned. It is the beautiful summer palace of the King. Situated at the foot of Alburz mountains, it is one of the most beautifully located and tastefully decorated palaces which I have ever seen. In spring and summer time, it is a heaven on earth. With its annexes and hot spring baths, it is a delightful place. Its statues and carpets are most fascinating. Leaving Ramsar we come to Chalus where the famous Silk Factory is located. It produces one of the finest and cheapest silks in the world. The caviar factory in Pehalvi produces the most delicious caviar I have ever tasted. In 1941, I remember purchasing half a kilo of caviar for 10 Tomans, but in 1942 when I returned to Teheran a caviar sandwitch was being sold for one pound in the restaurants. This will give an idea of the havoc which the pound and the dollar were creating upon the Iranian people. Prices shot up sky high. Similar was the case with the prices of silver and gold, sugar and meat, car tyres and tubes, which were notably high and out of the reach of common man. This was the blessing of the dollar and the pound which had brought the war to the footsteps of Iran, resulting in inflation. British and American Officers squandered money; the contractors filled their pockets to fly to Europe for a holiday. Progress in Iran seemed to have come to a

standstill. There was suspense all over. The magic wand of Raza Shah the Great had been put aside. But Nature willed it otherwise. The nation was determined to go ahead with the plans of the great master. His able son, the present Shahanshah of Iran, stepped into the shoes of his great father and started to implement his plans.

I stayed in Qazvin for a few weeks before moving to Teheran. Qavzin is one of the ancient cities of Iran especially in so far as Muslim history is concerned. It is one of the oldest seats of Muslim administration. Two things are remarkable in the area; one is the Koh-i-Almut where Hassan Bin Sabah built his earthly heaven, and the other is Kila-i-Mamun. The first is located about 25 miles from the city over the hills and is in a completely desolate condition. The second is situated within the town and dates back to the Sassanian period. Besides this the monument of Shahzada Hussain and the Jamia Masjid are wonderful pieces of architecture. Hamd-ullah Mastowfi, the great author of "Tarikh-i-Guzidah", is also buried here. His tomb had been recently renovated.

PEACOCK THRONE

I returned to Teheran 1942. I stayed here for a few days and looked around the historical places and modern constructions. The Gulistan Palace stood in its full glory with all its treasures including the Peacock Throne about which there has been so much controversy. This was finally resolved by William Jackson in his famous book "From Constantinople to the Home of Ummar Khayam." This is in addition to the light thrown on the Peacock Throne by Lord Kurzen and Tavernier. The finest pieces of carpets

and china are to be seen in the Guilstan Palace. The Kashi work outside the palace is most attractive.

I saw the Imperial jewels in the Bank-i-Milli then located in its old building. The museum and the libraries were not organised then as they are now. The publishing houses were few and printing was restricted. As compared with those days the standard of books being printed now is of a high order in every respect. Hospital and literary researches have progressed enormously. In 1941 and till the end of World War II all archaeological activities had been suspended and those interested in the ancient history had to turn to the books of Sir Rowlinson and Henry Layard. But after the World War II tremendous strides have been made in archaeology and new sites excavated and old monuments renovated. The story of Iranian culture and civilisation has been taken back to the earliest period of history as discovered in the excavation in the Caspian Sea area. In fact it is now being contested if the Caspian Sea area is not the earliest home of man.

Libraries have sprung up in Teheran and all over the country. Six universities are in full swing and education and scientific research are going at top speed. In the hospitals new laboratories and post-graduate training facilities are now found all over the country. I have already mentioned the Pasteure's Institute in Teheran. In its present state it is an outstanding institution doing excellent work. Another scientific institution of repute in Teheran is the Razi Institute which is doing excellent work in scientific research. The scientific research laboratories of Teheran University have made excellent progress under the able guidance of its versatile Chancellor

Dr. Syed Hossein Nasr. The Shams Eye Hospital in Teheran is another unique institution which is well equipped with most modern equipment.

After my stay for a few days in Teheran in 1942, I came to Qum where I stayed for a few weeks and roamed round its monuments and made trips to Ispahan and Kashan. To describe the monuments of Qum, Ispahan and Kashan would require a book, but I shall refrain from dabbling in history.

EXCELLENT ROADS

The roads were not good in those days as now. Today you find excellent asphalt roads and the journey takes little time. I shall come to a description of these places later on but let me pass on quickly to Dorud and Borujard where I stayed for a couple of weeks each. These places do not have much charm for the visitor, but I found the rustic life of the peasant was hard hit by conditions of war, although he was not directly involved in it. Cultivatable land is meagre in this part, yet where the streams flow, agricultural life is made possible and popular. There are small cottage industries like carpet making and the people are quite happy with their lot.

From here I moved to Qasr-i-Shirin through Karman Shah leaving Sultanabad on one side and Hamdan to the other. I was to return by this road again later the same year and then again in 1961 when I travelled by road from Baghdad. Qasr-i-Shirin is a border town of ancient glory, with a few monuments of the Sassani Muslim period to be found here and there. This is the famous place where the palace of Khusrau Parvez is located. Its ruins are still pointed out by the people. Farhad is supposed

to have dug and brought a water channel from the fresh water springs of Koh-i-Behistun in Karman Shah, the remnants of which are still to be seen there. It may be a legend woven round the local folklore but the fact is that all these sites can still be seen as described in Persian literature by eminent poets and historians. I have wandered over the barren hills surrounding the small town of Qasr-i-Shirin and have often wondered how green these hills must have looked in days gone by when such exciting dramas were enacted in the reign of ancient Iranians. We are told that in the time of Khusrau Parvez it had a park of 1,200,000 square metres with streams of running water, shady trees and a mass of multicoloured flowers. Khusrau's Palace stood in the centre of this park. Ten years later when I came to Teheran from Baghdad I passed through Qasr-i-Shirin again and I stopped to see the changes all around. I was thrilled to see tall poplar and cyprus trees growing on both sides of the road as it passed towards Karman Shah. The land had become fertile again. It shows what the people can do when given an opportunity to work in peace for their prosperity. I have seen such phenomenon of progress in several places in Iran. I give you another instance.

GRAIN & OIL

We learn from history that Khuzistan was a great wheat and sugar-cane growing area in the days of the Achaeminians and later in the time of Sassanians. But in modern times it became famous for its oil and stopped growing these commodities. Abadan with its surrounding oil wells emerged out of this fertile land. Recently the Iranian Government acting

on the ancient clues analysed the soil and have started to grow sugar-cane and wheat with excellent results. This will render miles of waste land into green fertile area yielding cash crops utilising the water of river Karun. This is a great advancement in the improvement of country's economy. It has ushered in the Green Revolution. It will supplement the oil earnings and bring more prosperity to the country by making it self-sufficient in food. Sugar was already being manufactured from beet-root but this was not sufficient. Some sugar-cane was also being grown in Mazandran but this was not a sufficient yield for the manufacture of sugar. By cultivating sugar-cane in Khuzistan, it will now be possible to manufacture sugar on a large scale.

In 1951, I was in Teheran once again. From here I was deputed by my Government to proceed to Abadan to look into the welfare of Pakistani nationals during the fateful days of nationalisation of oil in Iran. These Pakistanis were employed in the Abadan Refinery in the various capacities. I was there throughout this critical period. It was here that I met Dr. Mossadaq and Aqai Makki for the first time. Makki and I became great friends. In fact he took me along with him on two occasions when he was leading a procession to address a meeting. In the scorching month of June, I travelled with him on a jeep ahead of a procession at a very slow speed. In one place the jeep stopped to enable him deliver a speech. He put his hand in this pocket to take out his handkerchief to wipe off the sweat which was trickling down his face. To his utter amazement he found his pocket had been picked and his handkerchief along with his purse had vanished. He

turned towards me and said, "Look this is the state of poverty in my country. My countrymen will not even spare me", and he burst into an oration the like of which I had seldom heard. He was a great and dynamic personality who created an upheavel within a few days in the island of Abadan. The British were put to great inconvenience, so much so that they even had to send for their well-known battleship called "Moratius". Fantastic rumours were being poured over the All-India Radio and the B.B.C. Sitting in Khurram Shehar where life was normal, I used to wonder what great lies great people could tell. Eventually the British had to accede to the Iranian aspirations. I was present at the ceremony when the British flag was lowered and the Imperial Iranian flag raised over the Headquarters of the Abadan Refinery. The British and the Indian technicians left. The Pakistanis settled down to share the work of the refinery with their Iranian brothers. I cannot forget one particular instance. In the Abadan Refinery there is a plant called the Catalytic Cracker. This is a self-contained multistoreyed refinery which can process all types of oil from the crude oil. This was being manned by a Pakistani who was incharge of it. The British after having sent all their British and Indian staff to Behrain and Kuwait tried to bribe this Pakistani technician and offered him enormous salary which was ten times more than what he was getting, and asked him to leave Abadan and go to Kuwait. The idea was to put this Catalytic Cracker out of use. This man refused. They tried to man-handle him but he escaped to the Pakistan Consulate in Khurram Shehar where I was staying. He did not leave, and

we managed to keep him in hiding till he went back to his job and kept the Catalytic Cracker cracking.

Abadan and Khurram Shehar are small towns which are worth watching at night. Beautiful coloured lights make the whole area look like a fairy-land. In 1951 there was no road bridge over the Karun River. We had to cross in a boat and take the car on a ferry. Now there is a beautiful bridge which links the two sides of the town and communications have become greatly facilitated.

I left Iran at the end of 1951 after my second visit, to return to it again ten years later in 1961, and thereafter till 1969. I have been visiting it every year, sometime even twice. During this period I have had the chance of watching its progress very closely as I have visited most of its recently completed projects. I can also look back and compare it with the conditions of 1941. I have seen Teheran grow. I have seen Shiraz competing with Teheran. Historically Shiraz has precedence over Teheran. Hafiz and Saadi lie buried in its midst. With Persepolis, the first Capital of united Iran when Media and Paras were unified into greater Iran under Syrus the Great, situated in its vicinity it assumes a more important historical role. It has more of water and agriculture. Its university has now progressed to include all scientific post-graduate studies. Its roads and boulevards are most spacious and I do not think it will become as crowded a city as Teheran where the population has already touched the figure of two million.

DRAMATIC CHANGE

Similar are the conditions in Ispahan, Meshad

and Tabriz. Buildings, factories, universities and hospitals which are all modern in the real sense, are fast coming up to fulfil the requirements of modern age. Dams are being built at great cost and utilisation of wealth appropriately channellised. Such a dramatic change could not be possible without a benevolent monarch as the Head of the State. The Shahanshah of Iran, His Imperial Majesty Raza Shah Pehalvi has shown great initiative and foresight in planning and in bettering the lot of his people. In the field of health remarkable advancement has been made. Malaria which was the main malady of the country has been completely eradicated. I still remember the days when on the Caspian Sea I spent several sleepless nights on account of mosquito nuisance. There are very few mosquitoes to be seen now in Iran. Similarly many other strides have been made in the field of preventive medicine and industry. Excellent roads have been built. Not only the old roads have been replaced, but new roads have been made linking important towns and cutting short the distances between them. Dams have been built to improve agriculture. I have seen the Karraj Dam. I travelled to it in company with Dr. Jehan Shah Saleh who talked to me of several other important improvements in the country which I did not have the opportunity to see during my last visit. This is all due to the interest of His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah of Iran which he is taking in the welfare of his people and the country. May he live long to fulfil the ambition of his late father Raza Shah the Great and see his country strong and prosperous.

Baoli Jandiala Sher Khan

(A UNIQUE INSCRIPTION)

APPROXIMATELY ten miles north-west of Sheikhupura lies the small hamlet of Jandiala Sher Khan, which has a number of historical monuments. These monuments like many others in Pakistan are yet unsurveyed.

In the hamlet the most familiar monument is that of the tomb of Warris Shah, the celebrated author of the famous romance of Hir Ranjha. This tomb lies in a grove of date-palms, by the side of a seasonal lake. The lake curves round the mound on which the tomb lies, and separates it by a channel from another mound about 300 yards away. On this second mound lies a mosque and a Baoli, built in small bricks. It is a very solid and splended structure but now dilapidated.

A 'Baoli' is a drinking water well, with cells placed all around it for rest and recreation. In olden days these were dispersed all along the major routes of travel, and in some places even in the towns. Lahore till recently had a Baoli behind the Golden Mosque. It has its own history. These 'Baolis' served a very useful purpose to the travellers and for the local inhabitants. The one in the Jandiala is built on the same lines but is more elaborate with an attached mosque. The structures in Jandiala are well planned and designed, and the workmanship is superb. The mosque and the 'Baoli' have domes. As I am not concerned with their

detailed description I shall restrict myself to the inscription.

THE INSCRIPTION

This inscription is carved on a sandstone which is 34½″ long and 28½″ wide. It is placed on the inner arch of the interior of the Baoli, approximately 20 feet above the water level.

On my passing this information to the Director of the Central Museum, Lahore, this inscription has been removed from its original place and now lies in the Museum, where it is planned to be displayed along with photographs of the adjoining monuments thus reconstructing its history. Whether it would have served a useful purpose in its original place, or here, it is for experts to say.

Now, to come to the inscription. I was unable to photograph this in its original place owing to its inaccessibility. However, after its removal I have photographed it for the first time. My attempt to decipher it is also the first one and later on interpreters may improve upon my rendering which is as follows :

The following four things emerge from the various verses :

(1) The 'Baoli' was built in the time of Akbar the Great.

(2) Someone called Syed Ghaznavi made a request for its construction.

(3) Sher Khan was the person who gave this request a practical shape.

(4) The chronogram giving the date of construction is drawn from "Beh az Chah-i

Nakhshab" in the last verse, which according to the 'Abjad' comes to 976 A.H.

Now, Akbar was born at Amarkot in 949 A.H. and he died in the year 1014 A.H. He ascended the throne at Kalanaur in the year 964 A.H. at the age of 14/15. This gives him a life span of seventy-five years. Jahangir in the "Tuzk" says that Akbar lived up to the age of 75 years, eleven months and nine days. However, one thing is clear : Sher Shah Suri, also popularly known as Sher Khan, died in the year 952 A.H. when Akbar was about three years of age, and had not yet ascended the throne. The foundation-stone of the 'Baoli' is dated in the year 976 A.H. which is well after the death of Sher Shah Suri. Therefore this Sher Khan must be someone other than Sher Shah Suri. It is this man after whom Jandiala is known.

Now, in "Mantakhab-at-Tawarikh" of Badayuni, we find a celebrity known by this name whom he calls as Sher Khan Fauladi. We find trace of him in various campaigns fighting along side with Akbar's troops. We see him in Junagarh in the year 980 A.H. It is most probable that in the year 976 when the foundations of the 'Baoli' and the mosque were laid Sher Khan was holding an appointment in the area of Jandiala. But strangely enough no mention of him has been made by Abul Fazal in the "Ain-i Akbari." I have gone through the list of his dignitaries, but his name is not there. Perhaps his name may have appeared elsewhere. A thorough search will have to be made when I make a detailed study of this problem.

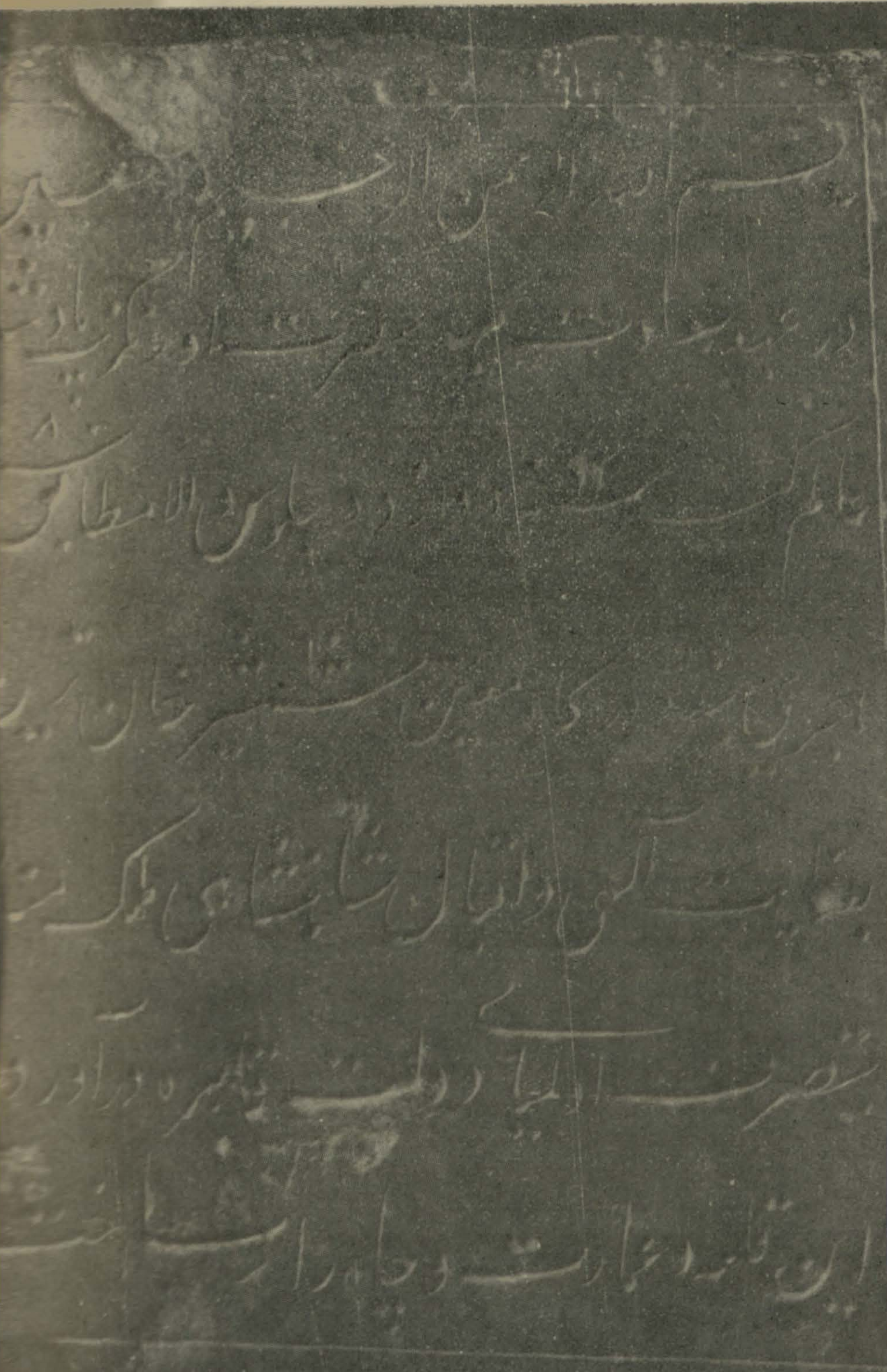
The other person, namely, Syed Ghaznavi, I have failed to trace. There is, however, one name

mentioned by Badayuni, which resembles this, and it is Bekasi Ghaznavi who is mentioned as a very learned and pious man. He was also a poet. He had performed the Haj. He was an erudite scholar and a Traditionist. It may be that this venerable person is no other than Syed Ghaznavi, whose name appears in the inscription as the inspirer of its construction.

DIFFICULTY

Some difficulty arose in the photographing and deciphering of the inscription which needs to be mentioned for the benefit of experts. The inscription is carved on sandstone and appears embossed and protruded. It is not a carving in, where filling is done to make the letters prominent by contrast of the filling material with the background, as is often seen in the inscriptions on marble slabs where black plaster material is used as a filling.

In this particular case the letters blend with the background colour of the slab, thus making a difficult reading, with the naked eye. It was, therefore, difficult to read the whole chronogram. A straight photograph was attempted twice, but it did not facilitate reading of the inscription. Then the surface of the letters was rubbed with charcoal. The picture reproduced here is the result of this attempt. Paper rubbings with charcoal have been in vogue for quite sometime. I am not aware of this method which I have used, to have been ever used before, as I have seen some reproductions which I feel could be improved by similar applications. This inscription now appears as if it was carved on a marble slab with black filling.



The writing is in the Nastaliq style. The period of this inscription is not very far removed from the date of the invention of this style of writing. At this early stage Nastaliq style must have improved greatly as this is an exquisite specimen.

THIS IS NOT THE LAHORE I LOVED

LAHORE has an unusual importance in our history, both literary and factual. Right from the time of Utabi, Al-Beruni, Masood Saad Salman, Faizi and Talab Amulti, people have sung its praises. One now wonders, where have all its charms disappeared! I have seen its beauty and charms vanish during the last six decades. It is no longer the Lahore I loved.

Lahore was a city of gardens and monuments. Its citizens were imbued with a sense of decoration and preservation of their heritage. No doubt the population was much less and the traffic problem not so acute; yet, the total population with the four walls of the city was almost the same as it is today. But the conditions prevailing in the walled city today are abominable. Houses have become dilapidated and gutters blocked with filth and flies floating all over. Gardens have disappeared, in fact, the only one recreatien ground for the citizens of Lahore which was a circular garden all around the city walls with a canal of fresh water running through it, is in a shameless condition. All its flower beds and flowering trees have disappeared. The lawns have been destroyed. Buffaloes are roaming round unrestricted and now there is not a single place where one can relax.

Here was a place which thronged with students in spring time who sat under the trees preparing for

their forthcoming examinations. The luxurious perfume of the citrus prevailed in the garden, Alas! these citrus trees have been cut down. How the citizens must feel their absence, particularly at the approach of spring! There was a time when this garden was an avenue of public meetings and hundreds of thousands of people sat there to listen to orators like Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan in pin drop silence. These meetings took place especially in spring time when the citrus trees were in bloom. It was a pleasure to squat on the grassy lawns and listen to unforgettable creations. People took pride in gathering hours before the scheduled time and sit and wait in the garden and gossip. Some even performed ablutions in the fresh canal water and said their prayers on the grassy lawns.

There were other activities too in the garden. Outside almost every alternate gate there were arenas (Akharas) of wrestlers (Pehalwans). The famous Imam Bakhsh, Goonga and Gama had their arenas. In these arenas youngsters also thronged to watch and take instruction. After exercise they would bathe in the canal and return home fresh. Young boys were often seen playing with tops on the canal bank whose soil was appropriate for the rotating tops. On the perimeter of the garden along the Circular Road were to be seen multi-coloured kite flying string being prepared. Lilaris (dyers) spread out colourful clothes to dry. The sight was indeed colourful, and there was no filth to be seen anywhere.

There were gardens within the city walls also. These too have disappeared. Debris was never seen

lying about nor the roads ever broken. There was no disruption of water or power supply or the telephones. Admittedly the population has grown enormously but the resources have also multiplied manyfold. The civic services have deteriorated enormously and beyond account. Efficiency has disappeared. The quality of food materials supplied was excellent. There was no adulteration and weights were correct, prices reasonably low and honesty generally prevailed. Society was dignified. Today values have changed completely, for the worse, if I may so.

The cantonments in pre-Independence days always held a higher status than the cities and were much better administered. In fact, there was a marked difference between a city and a cantonment, and one felt this as soon as one entered the limits of a cantonment. The Lahore cantonment was exceptionally a place of envy. But today it is as much in a shambles as the city. There appears to be no control on anything. Every shop has a different price, although the commodities are the same, No price lists are displayed as in olden days. No inoculation states are displayed in bakeries or restaurants. The fish market is a breeding place for flies, and the poultry market is nothing but filth. These are features for anyone to see. Dustbins are uncovered and there is no arrangement for the removal of filth. People burn their refuse lying outside their houses. It is a great pity that the cantonment which is a repository of our youthful defence personnel should be lacking in normal habitable facilities. Sewage from the houses is thrown into uncovered sewers running along the road which is

rarely flushed, thus causing obnoxious smell all over.

Similar conditions prevail all over the town. Alas ! one did not see this lack of discipline before independence. It may be said that discipline is disappearing all over the world. But we are a new nation. Discipline should have been the hallmark of our progress.

MORNING WALK

I still remember crowds, mostly non-Muslims, going out for a walk in the early hours of the morning. This crowd comprised men, women and children. Most of them went towards the river side where they bathed and on return were ready to go to work. I still remember the non-Muslims sweeping their shops after sprinkling water, and then burning Agar Batti to perfume their shops. And by the time shops had opened the street was full of pleasant smell. Today you walk through the Anarkali bazaar, the foul smell is suffocating. Sweet smell was dear to our Holy Prophet (OWBP) to whom is also attributed the saying, "Cleanliness is half the Faith", the other half being prayers. Today we do not see many people out for a walk in the early hours of the morning. They are fast asleep oblivious of their duties to the Creator and their own bodily needs.

Lahore used to be prominent for its gaiety in sports and festivals. During Christmas the city looked like a big carnival. Iqbal Park (Minto Park) was the avenue of all games in those days. The cricket festival was memorable. The public turned out in thousands to see Abba Majid playing. He was called Abba by young and old, as he was the hero cricketer of those days. (His contemporaries

Hassan Shah, Captain Nasir and Abdul Salam were equally well known.) One saw the rare combination of the sportsman and a scholar in him when he later wrote the monumental Urdu dictionary 'Jamiul-Lughat' in four volumes, the like of which has not yet been published in the subcontinent.

The Shalamar Mela or the Chiraghan Mela which followed the colourful Basant Mela (festival of spring or kites) was another memorable spring festival. People came from all the surrounding villages of Lahore, singing and dancing. It lasted three days and was an important function for the Lahorites. Prominent well-to-do families would set up their own shamianas and tents and spend three days enjoying and participating in the festivities which were then held in the Shalamar Gardens. Shops of all kinds were opened and did roaring business.

Chrismas fetes and circus also were a regular show in Lahore. Alas ! I have not seen a Xmas fete or a circus in Lahore since Independence, nor have I seen for a long time the Shalamar Mela like that held within the garden in the olden days.

There were no cinemas then, but frequently, there was a theatre, either owned by Dadabhai, a Parsi gentleman, or Agha Hashar. Lahore had quite a number of literary circles where scholars gathered. Prominent amongst those were the Faqir Khana and Lilly Lodge, where Iqbal was a regular visitor and recited his freshly composed verses before reading them in public (Hakim Ahmad Shuja—Lahore Ka Chelsea—Naqoosh). Iqbal was virtually groomed in these centres in the early part of this century. The name of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's famous Urdu daily, the 'Zamindar,' was proposed at

the Lilly Lodge, and Muhammad Din Fauq collected material for his "History of Kashmir" in these circles. Such were the occupations of the people of Lahore in those days. While the Faqir Khana still stands today in Bazar Hakiman, Lilly Lodge was burnt down by the Hindus in 1947. It had played a commendable part in the awakening of the Muslims of Lahore. Today too there are some literary circles in Lahore but they take pride in criticism but do no creative work. Creation is a symbol of conduct. Where there is character there is construction and when morals decay destruction and indiscipline become the pride of performance.

There was a time in the history of Lahore when it grew almonds (Badami Bagh), and grapes (Anguri Bagh). Its soil has been destroyed, and the plantations have disappeared. However, these fruits still grow and can be seen in private gardens. But organised efforts are not being made to cultivate them any more. People of my age group will still remember numerous pine trees in the Bagh-i-Jinnah (Lawrence Garden). Perhaps a few still stand to this day. Pines grew in large numbers in Lahore and Rawalpindi and bore fruit. They are all gone. How I miss the lost glory of my beloved town !

I have not touched upon the historical aspect of Lahore. Indeed a great deal has already been written, and a great deal waits to be written by our scholars. But I would like to mention one thing here : after the late Syed Abdul Latif wrote his monumental work, "Lahore, its history, archaeological remains, and antiquities", no one has added anything new to it. However, the Lahore number of "Naqoosh" is a veritable contribution and needs

praise. This does not mean that we have no scholars who can undertake the work of further discovery. Certainly we have, but unfortunately they get no encouragement. Recently a Pakistani archaeologist of international repute has been refused permission to excavate the suburbs of Lahore where undoubtedly invaluable material lies buried waiting the hand of an expert digger. I am confident Lahore has many more stories to tell than are known. Its history may go back even prior to the days of the Harappa civilisation.

AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF

THE FALL OF MAYMYO

BURMA, the land of Pagodas, received its independence in early 1948. There was colourful rejoicing, but the rejoicing disappeared very soon and the colour became blended in the fireworks of the tracer bullets fired indiscriminately at night. The independence of Burma was at stake from the very day independent Burma opened its eyes. There was preponderance of explosive turbulance all over the country designed diplomatically to undermine the newly-born national interest of that beautiful country. No sooner had Burma become independent, Mr. Winston Churchill announced that there would be more killing in that country than what India saw at the time of partition. How true these words of the political prophet proved will become apparent from what follows below.

This narrative, although unpublished, is historically important and covers a portion of the fifth decade of this sub-continent. There was more killing of the Burmans during this upheaval than perhaps during the Japanese invasion of Burma. The present writer is an eye-witness to the political intrigues and diplomatic bungling, which took place immediately after Burma attained its independence. I was a witness to this tragedy till the Burmans regained their almost lost empire which had fallen in the hands of the Karens who were knocking at the door of Rangoon, after conquering a formidable

part of that country. I shall unfold this woeful episode as the scenes unroll from the screen of my memory, where they are preserved in the archives of my mind since the last thirty years.

Immediately after the independence of Burma, an agreement was signed between the British Government and the Government of Burma, that Burma shall have a team of British military advisers, who would be distributed according to the following plan: Some will be attached to the North Burma Sub-District, an equal number will be attached to the South Burma Sub-District, and the balance will work at the War Office in Rangoon to advise on national defence matters. They numbered over a hundred officers of all arms. As the scene of our play is the North of Burma, I shall restrict myself to the particular group of advisers, who were stationed in Maymyo. The British officers stationed in Maymyo were headed by Brigadier 'A'. Maymyo is a beautiful town, in the North of Burma, and each one of them was comfortably settled in an independent bungalow with the usual diplomatic privileges.

For those who are not aware of the main divisions of the communities in Burma, I shall briefly describe the important ones. The population of Burma comprises mainly of the Burmese (Buddhists). The Karens, who are Christians, form about 20%, and lastly the Chins and Kachins are about 10%. Other minor communities are the Shans, the Muslims who are called Zerbadis, and the Indians and the Pakistanis. These figures are approximate. The Burma army is composed of Burmese, Karens, Chins and the Kachins. Before Burma attained its independence, most of the senior army officers were Karens. In fact,

the first Commander-in-Chief of the independent Burma Army was a Karen officer named Maj-Gen. Smith Dun, who had qualified with the first batch of the Indian Military Academy. The important point to remember in this distribution is that Karens are Christians and were pro-British. Gen. Smith Dun was hardly in the chair for three months when the Karens were declared disloyal. They were disarmed and put into a concentration camp in Maymyo—I believe they were brought there from all over the country. It was thought that North Burma was a safe place as it had a Kachin Rifle Training Centre in addition to other regular troops whose strength was about a Brigade. Gen. Smith Dun, the Commander-in-Chief, was sent on long leave. He too came to spend the summer in the cool climate of Maymyo, and was given a comfortable house situated strategically on a dominating feature. Gen. Ne Win, the present head of the State, took over. He arrived in Maymyo just before the independence of Burma, and was given command of the North Burma Sub-District. He is a very popular officer and is tremendously loved by all alike. He is one of those people who have the knack of winning the hearts of people instantaneously. He is unassuming and alert, and is a patriot to the very core of his heart. He is simple, smiling and sturdy. He was the right hand man of the late Gen. Aung Saung, and has played his part extremely well.

The moment Gen. Ne Win left North Burma for Rangoon to take over from Gen. Smith Dun trouble started in full force over the entire North. Perhaps it was awaiting his departure. Conditions became disturbed and communications were

cut off with the rest of the country. There was sporadic fighting between the Government forces and the insurgents. But a full scale battle had not yet been reported. The Karens were pushing forward everywhere. Most of the Karen senior officers deserted to escape being put in the concentration camp. They were now guiding the operations against the Government forces. The Karen soldier was well trained and disciplined. And with the tactical guidance of the British Advisers, which I shall illustrate presently, they were giving a good account of themselves.

The position of the British Military Mission was most intriguing. I have already briefly explained their grouping and allocation of task. The Karens were moving towards the North to set free their comrades interned in the concentration camp in Maymyo. In the South, the Communists were creating trouble for the Government. The Communists were also armed. Hand-grenades, which the Americans and the British had left while on the run during the Japanese attack, were being sold two annas a piece. Rifles and sten-guns were floating round for the asking, and .303 ammunition was so abundant that firing went on at night even when there was complete black out in the town. This was all "fun fire" making use of the Tracer Bullets to form the fireworks. During the day three-inch mortars were flying over like pebbles. In the midst of this 'abundance' of fighting material, the British Advisers in the North chose a very peculiar line of action. They started to help the Karens against the Government troops. They considerably improved their strategy. In the South it was rumoured that

the British Advisers were even helping the Communists to fight the Burmese forces. And, at the War Office in Rangoon their group was advising the Government against the doings of their own two groups in the North and the South. Perhaps their policy was to completely incapacitate the Burmese forces, and to help the Karens to take over the administration. And, actually at one time the Karens had the whole of the country in their hand, except Rangoon. Had they cut off the water supply from In Sin, Rangoon would have fallen like a ripe apple into the lap of the Karens. But this was not to be. It was perhaps merely to cause killing, as predicted by Sir Winston Churchill. The situation was very intriguing for us, and we often sat guessing at what was happening.

One morning sitting in my bungalow, I switched on the radio, and while I was fiddling about with the needle, I heard a signal being passed half in code half in clear. It could not have been very far from my house, as the sound was very loud, and I happened to recognise the voice. I called my wife to see if she could also recognise the voice, and to my great amazement she at once said this is Major 'C' of the British Military Mission who lived just round the corner, from my house, under the foot of the hills. I immediately went across to call on him—in fact, my intention was to confirm my suspicion. The bearer came out and said that the sahib had gone out to shoot in the jungle since morning and he did not know when he would return. I was taken aback at this news, as no one dared to go out in the jungle with a gun and shoot when insurgents were all around the place. However, I

stopped to talk with the Officer's wife who had come out to greet me. I was just about to return when I saw the Major returning from the jungle. He was carrying a transmitter over his shoulders. And of course he also had a shot-gun hung from a sling over his shoulder. His clothes were full of dried leaves and thorns. My suspicion was confirmed. I told him why I had come. He laughed and said : "You are a naughty man." I thought to myself that I may still be wrong ; he may have just been passing a message to one of his own people, as there were no telephone communications. But then, why should he get out of his house to do that ? The matter looked to me more suspicious. However, one day the whole game became crystal clear. It happened like this.

As I have already mentioned that there were no communications with the outside world, the town had been isolated. Even the landing ground, In Sin near Rangoon, was in the hands of the Karens. Sometime it would change hands, but always remained within the range of mortar fire. Planes could not take off. Train journeys had been discontinued and road movement was unsafe, In the meantime the Karens had been trying hard to win over the Kachins and Chins, but had remained unsuccessful.

One morning we heard the noise of aeroplanes. There was rejoicing, and everyone went out to see who had come. There was no firing. There were two army planes hovering over the town. This happy sight was seen after months. The planes had come from Rangoon to take fresh supplies. Rangoon was completely cut off from its suburbs, and no fresh

supplies were possible. The planes landed at 7 a.m. and after a couple of hours took off to return.

Now at Maktilla, a town about 80 miles to the South of Maymyo, Karens had been fighting the Government troops, and they had managed to win over a company of the Kachins. Maktilla had fallen, but the news of its fall was intercepted by the British Advisers who were manning the transmissions. No one knew in Maymyo that the Kachins had been won over by the Karens nor did anyone know about the fall of Maktilla. The returning planes landed at Maktilla to refill. The crew was also unaware of the fall of Maktilla, and no sooner had they landed they were arrested by the Kachins who had been won over. Why they did not refill at Maymyo remains a mystery. Perhaps, it was a part of the plan. The whole episode was so dramatic that it looked like a tale from the "Arabian Nights".

In one of these planes the Karen commander pushed in twenty-four soldiers, half Karens and half Kachins, and flew back to Maymyo. They had a Karen Pilot ready ? Everyone was surprised at the return of only one plane. There was great excitement, and everyone rushed to the landing ground at Anisakan. There was not a single Officer from the North Burma Sub-District Headquarters who did not go there. Why they all went heaven only knows ! As the plane landed, out came the dozen Kachins first. They were armed to the teeth. They disarmed everyone and made them sit with their hands up ! This must have shaken everyone. Then followed the twelve Karens. It was not till then that the Officers of the Headquarters realised what had happened. Four guards were left to look

after these Officers while the twenty of them took two trucks brought by these Officers and made for the Headquarters. Why these senior Officers had come in trucks and not in jeeps or staff cars is also not clear to me. The manner in which these insurgents loaded themselves in the trucks is most intriguing. In the front truck stood ten Karens with their backs towards the outside, so that no one could make out who they were, as they had their faces turned inwards. They were all dressed alike in olive green uniforms. In the second truck that followed stood the ten Kachins facing outwards dressed alike. Now as the two trucks moved on any onlooker would think that there were Kachins in both the trucks. There was no chance of any suspicion. The trucks moved towards the Headquarters. I have already mentioned that Kachin Training Centre was opposite the North Burma Sub-District Headquarters, where the Karens were interned. The rest of the troops were scattered around the town. As they reached the Headquarters area the hind truck carrying the Kachins turned round and went straight to Kachin lines and made for the Quarter Guard where all the arms and ammunitions were stored. After a little canvassing with their own men the Quarter Guard was handed over to the ten incoming Kachins who took the keys of the concentration camp, and released the whole of the Karen internees who were in thousands. Arms were distributed. The other truck which went to the Headquarters carrying the ten Karens, surrounded the entire Headquarters. Through the loudspeakers it was announced that Maymyo had fallen and no one was to open fire. Troops were asked to surrender. Twenty

soldiers had conquered Maymyo, the Headquarters of a brigade. The Government forces did not surrender but immediately ran into the jungle and hid themselves to return at midnight. This was evidently according to a set plan. The Karens did not want to hill them just yet. They were allowed to run.

Maymyo is a beautiful hilly town situated at a height of about 5,000 feet above the sea level. It is forty miles to the North of Mandalay. It is surrounded by hills having lakes in catchment areas. The entire town presents a beautiful scene. The hills are covered with fir and pine trees. They are not very far from the town proper.

A railway line runs through the heart of the town. And the plan of the Government troops was to infiltrate at night along the railway track and capture the town. The plan was indeed made by the advisers and later disclosed to the Karens. After sunset, the Karens took positions all along the railway track, hiding themselves in bushes and ditches along the railway line. About the middle of the night when the Government troops returned to capture their vital points, the Karens allowed them to come into the trap. By two in the morning they had all come in. They had been trapped and surrounded. Suddenly there was such a hue and cry that the entire town was taken aback with a tremendous roar, as if some very great calamity had befallen the people. Only a few shots were fired. There was calm again for some time. The Government troops not knowing what to do made way into private houses and took up their defences. Firing started in the early hours of the morning and con-

tinued nonstop for three days. Then there was a lull. Rumours spread like wild fire. The Government troops were now making for the Government treasury, as they wanted to save it from falling into enemy hands. But the Government forces had been reduced to the minimum. Almost the entire force had been wiped out, and in addition a large number of civilians had succumbed. It was estimated that about ten thousand people had been killed. The treasury was captured by the insurgents and money taken away.

Opposite the treasury was a Bank, called the Bank of Upper Burma. (It was owned by a Pakistani. who had settled there. He had recently died. The owner was a dear friend of the writer.) Somehow I felt that after the capture of the treasury the insurgents would make for the Bank. They were in need of money. Fearing the fate of my friend, I decided to go to him and bring him out. At a very great risk I made for the Bank. But I soon discovered that it was not possible for me to take my car much further. Tumbled cars, broken electric poles and dead bodies blocked my way. So leaving my car I walked through the lanes. I approached the Bank from the back side. I had to jump over many a corpses before I could make my way towards the Bank. Its front two gates facing the treasury were littered with dead bodies. Perhaps the Burmese soldiers were trying to find a refuge inside the compound of the Bank, and had been shot while on the run.

I was, however, pleased to find my friend alive with his nephew. But the two of them had been reduced to skeletons. There was no water supply

for the last four days, all the provisions which they had had exhausted. The nephew was in a very precarious condition. Although young as compared with his uncle, he had evidently had a nervous breakdown. His uncle implored me to take him away. The old man was very brave, and insisted on remaining in the Bank. They had their living apartments on the upper storey of the Bank. We somehow felt that the insurgents would not touch the property of a Pakistani. The owner was a well-known Senator of Burma. And so it happened, that he was left untouched. Through a diplomatic manoeuvring with the British Military Mission people we were given assurance that the Karens will not touch the Bank. All the windows of the living apartments of the Bank had been shattered by bullets, and it was amazing how the two of them had survived. The Bank was even twice hit by a three-inch mortar ! I heard some horrifying tales of the fight at the treasury which had been witnessed by the two of them at the Bank.

In a day all had become quiet, except for a few shots here and there at night. The Karens had started to organise their affairs. But the destruction which had been caused was left untouched. Perhaps they were not too sure of their stay.

In the meantime negotiations had started with the Chin Rifles to win them over. They were stationed some way out towards the North near Mytkins. Great persuasions followed but the negotiations failed. The end was just as dramatic as the beginning. One morning we heard that the Chins had marched in, and Brigadier 'D', the Commander of Chin Rifles, had taken over. The

Karens had surrendered. All became quiet.

I must relate two more incidences before I wind up this narrative. One of them will illustrate my suspicion about the part that the British Military Mission was playing. It was this. When Gen. Smith Dun had come on leave I used to visit him occasionally. He was a very charming person. British Officers also used to frequent his place. The incidence of the British Major passing on the signals was yet fresh in my mind. One day I sat in my office and typed out a signal, which ran something like the following:

British Embassy, Rangoon.

Following for Brigadier 'E' Pakistan Army (.) Inform family Rashid and wife OK.

I took this signal to Gen. Smith Dun and requested him to do me a favour. I pleaded to him that there had been no news from our people from Pakistan for the last six months, nor have we been able to send out any. Everyone at home must be worried. If he could help me, I could send a message home. At first he was taken aback at this request of mine. He did not understand how this could be done. I explained to him that he had good relations with the British Mission people and if (showing him the signal) he would request them to pass this on to their Embassy in Rangoon I am sure it will get to my people. But he said there were no communications. I suggested to him that if they or the Karen Headquarters could pass it on to the Karen Headquarters in In Sin, eight miles from Rangoon, surely from there it could be passed on to the British Embassy without any difficulty. He looked at me surprisingly but took the signal from my hand, saying that he will not give it to the Mission people,

but would hand it over to the Karen Headquarters and leave it to them to pass on. This incidence took place just a few days after the fall of Maymyo, when everything had become quiet and before the Government troops re-captured this town. I thanked him and came away. The signal was passed from the Karen Headquarters in Maymyo to their Headquarters in In Sin near Rangoon, who in turn passed it on to the British Embassy. Two months later when I returned to Pakistan, I found the message had been delivered to the right person, who had informed my family. My suspicion was confirmed.

The other incidence is regarding the tremendous part which the Hindus in Burma played in running down the Muslims of Burma in the eyes of the Burma Government.

As I have mentioned, there is a considerable population of the Muslims amongst the Burmese. And to distinguish them is rather difficult. They all look alike and speak the same language. They are from the same stock. When the Government troops re-occupied Maymyo, the Hindus started a propaganda against them and reported to the authorities that the Burmese Muslims had sided with the insurgents and helped them to come in. They wanted them to be deprived of their properties, which were by no means meagre. There was a drive to confiscate the properties of those who had sympathised with the insurgents. The Burmese Muslims are a well-to-do people and are thoroughly patriotic. Fortunately, the Burmese Government did not play into their hands, and the Muslims were

left untouched. As a gesture of goodwill, on his first trip after the recapture of Maymyo, Gen. Ne Win called at my house to see if we were both well.

Maulana Obeid Ullah Sindhi

(A page from my Autobiography)

IT was in the year 1939 that I used to visit the well-known Sheranwala mosque, where the late Maulana Ahmad Ali used to deliver his learned discourses. I had been introduced to him earlier by my uncle Khwaja Abdul Wahid who was the Secretary of the Islamic Research Institute in Lahore, which had started with the blessings of Allama Iqbal. We lived about four miles away from the mosque, and I used to come early in the morning and say my prayers and thereafter attend the sermons. I then returned home to go to my college.

One morning I was returning home via Yakki Gate when I was surprised to find a friend of mine standing outside the gate of his house. This was very unusual, as he was a late riser and a late comer to the college. I asked him how it was that he was up so early. He replied that he could not sleep the whole night for some reason, and early in the morning he had come out to get some fresh air, when he suddenly saw me coming. I said to him that I visited him two days ago and was told that he had gone to attend a feast. He said, "No ; I had not gone to a feast but had gone to the college office to deposit my registration fee for the examination." I was taken aback ; for I had forgotten all about it. As we were class fellows in the final M.B.B.S., he asked me to hurry up and pay my fees, as it was the last day. I hurried back and paid my fees just in time. After I had paid my fees, something told me that

Providence had kept him awake all night to inform me, otherwise I would have misssed my chance of appearing in the examination. And this particular coincidence further convinced me that it was an indication that I would pass in my examination. I was so convinced that for the remaining period I gave up all studies and put my books aside. As luck would have it, I passed my examination and became a full-fledged Doctor. I was very much impressed by this happening, and as I was in the habit of attending the sermons of Maulana Ahmad Ali daily, I resolved to establish private practice in that locality and with this in view I hired a house very close to the mosque.

One morning when I had gone to attend the sermon, we were sitting in a circle, when a bearded man, bare and bald headed, wearing a rusty robe appeared from one of the chambers of the mosque. He came and stood by the late Maulana Ahmad Ali who introduced us to the new-comer saying: "This is Maulana Obeid Ullah Sindhi." This was in October 1939. I had heard of his name but never met him, and I had also heard of his deeds. Maulana Sindhi after a few words said, "I have come to stay in Lahore for sometime and I intend to teach the philosophy of Shah Wali Ullah to a selected few young men." So saying he pointed his finger towards me, and said, "You are one of them." I was taken aback by this selection as the Maulana had never met me. Thereafter he picked up two more from this gathering: one being the eldest son of Maulana Ahmad Ali and the second was Maulvi Bashir Ahmad Ludhianvi. The classes were started on the top storey of the office of the Anjuman-i-

Khuddam-ud-Din, a few yards from the mosque. Maulana Obeid Ullah Sindhi was himself putting up on the top storey of this building. The classes started with Shah Wali Ullah's book called Sataat (سطعات) which is in Persian and deals mostly with metaphysics. I was not much conversant with the Persian language in those days, and found the text beyond my comprehension. However, I listened to the commentary and discourse of the Maulana very carefully and came to the conclusion that Shah Wali Ullah had Islamised Greek philosophy. One day while discussing a section of this book, I happened to mention that what Shah Wali Ullah is saying is identical with the thought of Plato ; especially, the ideas about Alam-i-Mithal, Hazirat-ul-Quds, Shakhs-i-Akbar and Shakhs-i-Asghar, which were identical with Sanctus Permagnum, Merocosm and Microcosm ! The Maulana did not like this and became annoyed with me and asked me to leave the class. Picking up my copy book and pen I walked away. Next day the Maulana complained to my uncle that I was rude and insolent. My uncle Khwaja Abdul Wahid asked me as to what had happened, and I told him the whole story. He asked me to go and apologise to him which I did and rejoined the classes. I finished the book and we had become friends. He developed a great likeness for me. I found Maulana Sindhi rather tense, disciplined and rough in his life, but he did have his moments of humour and relaxation. All these habits of his seemed likable to me. He was soldierly and lived a very simple life. In fact, he was almost like a hermit. He had advanced modern ideas, and thought ahead of his time. He

was not averse to wearing western clothes or a hat ; in fact, he sometimes took off my hat from my head and put it on his own. One day standing outside the mosque, I wanted to photograph him and Maulana Ahmad Ali to which he consented. But Maulana Ahmad Ali covering his face made straight into the mosque ! Maulana Sindhi stood comfortably at attention, and allowed me to photograph him.

In the year 1940, a number of dignitaries were paying visit to Lahore and one of them was Syed Sulaiman Nadvi. He was a guest of my uncle Khwaja Abdul Wahid. On the day of his departure a send-off lunch was hosted by my uncle. Maulana Obeid Ullah Sindhi had also been invited. After the lunch we went to the railway station to see Maulana Nadvi off. Three of us sat in a tonga ; Maulana Sindhi taking the front seat, Maulana Nadvi and I sat on the back seat. As we got out off at the Delhi Gate and made our way to the railway station via the Landa Bazar, we saw a girl cycling past. This was an unusual sight in Lahore in those days. The girl was somewhat charming and well dressed. Maulana Sindhi turned around and said to Maulana Nadvi, "Did you see beauty (Husn) go past on the cycle ?" To this Maulana Nadvi replied, "Maulana, beauty (Husn) resides in the eyes of the onlooker !" And we laughed the rest of the way.

At the railway station there was still some time left for the train to depart. Maulana Nadvi went inside the compartment and sat on his seat looking outwards through the window where we were standing. We talked on various subjects. Maulana Sindhi during the conversation frequently recited verses from the Quran to make his point. I found

that his recitation was unusually impressive and often owe-inspiring. In fact, at one moment I felt the platform trembling. Perhaps the vibrations from his intonational stresses had made the platform synchronise sympathetically ! He had an excellent pronunciation with a grandeur in his expression. The train left soon after and we both came away. It was quite warm in the afternoon and we walked to the Sheranwala mosque which is about a mile and a half from the railway station. I still remember that I was wearing a sola hat while the Maulana was bare-headed and without a footwear. But he walked calmly. The road was tarmacked and the footpath was cemented, but he was walking comfortably.

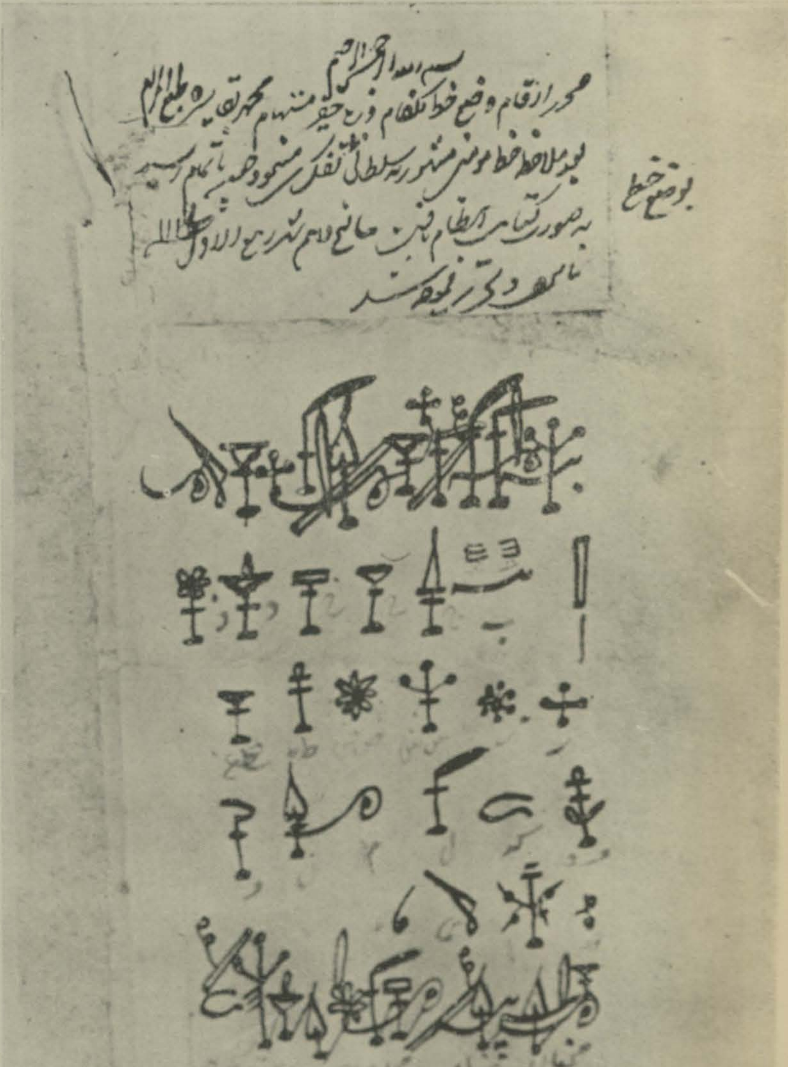
Sometime later, at the Anjuman, where he was staying, he said to me, "Why don't you join the Army ?" I was taken aback and thought for a while. The Second World War was on. I replied to say that I was not in favour of joining the Indian Army and fighting for the British. He said, "You and your Maulvis are fools. All the Hindus and the Sikhs will join the army and acquire all the military experience while you remain devoid of all such experience. Go then and join the army." At that moment his political programme came to my mind and I said, "Maulana have you not recently organised the Jamna, Narbada, Sindh Sagar Party ?" "Yes, I have. But what about it !" To this I replied, "Only two days ago I was marking this area on the map which you have published, and I found the boundaries are almost the same as those of Pakistan which has been proposed by the Muslim League. I would like to remain here and see this dream come true." He asked me to be silent and

not to disclose this to anyone, as he was planning a PAKISTAN himself while remaining in the Indian National Congress! I was surprised at this disclosure. "But never mind," he said, "you go and join the army. We will need experienced people for our army!" My father had also been asking me to join the army but I was reluctant.

Two days later, I went to call on my father. He had not yet returned from his office, and I sat waiting in the garden of our bungalow, facing the gate. An elderly person wearing snow-white clothes and a Turkish cap passed in front of our gate and turned his face to look inwards. I felt as if he was going to come in, but he passed away. After a while he returned again to look inside, and walked away. This time too I thought he was coming in. He came back the third time and walked straight in. I stood up and offered him a chair, and he sat down quietly without saying a word, his lips moving as if he was reciting something. There was complete silence. Then I asked him what for he had come, and did he want to see my father, to which he replied, "No." "Then what for have you come?" I asked him. "Just like that," he said and smiled. As I was seeing him humming something quietly, and was impressed with his personality, I thought he may be a holy man, and I should ask him for some guidance. I suddenly asked him to tell me something also which I should recite for my spiritual welfare. He smiled, and asked me to bring a paper and pen. I immediately brought the paper and the pen and gave it to him. But he asked me to write it down myself. He recited a prayer in Arabic. I was not conversant with the writing of Arabic and made

several mistakes. He took the paper from my hand, laughed and corrected my mistakes. He made me read it correctly, and when I had learnt it by heart, I asked him when and how many times I should recite. He said there is no restriction in time and number. Recite it as many times as you please and whenever it is convenient to you. So saying he departed. He had hardly gone out of the gate when I felt that I should bring him back and ask for some more guidance. But as I reached the gate he had disappeared. I looked for him all around but he was not to be found anywhere. However, I now feel he may have gone into the graveyard which was opposite our bungalow. Soon after the prayer appeared on my lips and I started to recite it. Hardly an hour had passed when my father returned from his office. I met him for a short while and came away. On my way back something urged me to go to the office of the Inspector General, Hospitals. I do not know why and what for. On way to my house I had to pass by the Punjab Civil Secretariat. I rode straight to the office of the I. G. He was about to leave. Colonel B. P. Barucha, who had been my Principal, was the I. G. I saluted him and at once blurred out that I want to join the Army ! Could he recommend me? He was surprised and said he had wondered why I had not so far offerad my services. He had known me quite well during my student days. I was captain of the cricket team and an editor of the College Magazine. He at once rang up the Recruiting Medical Officer and asked him to check me up medically and send him the medical report by hand through me. I at once made for the Cantonment Recruiting Office and brought my

fitness certificate and went to his bungalow which in those days used to be on the Kashmir Road opposite the Government House. I handed him the medical report and he at once gave me a signed form asking me to report to the Training Centre No. 1 at Rawalpindi where I would be given necessary training. All this had happened in a few hours and seemed unbelievable to me. I returned to my house and told my wife the whole story, and left her thinking while I came straight to Maulana Obeid Ullah Sindhi to whom I also related the entire episode in detail. He laughed and said, "Well done : it was not easy to get hold of you !" I did not understand what he meant, and up till now the whole episode has remained a mystery to me, quite incomprehensible to my feeble intelligence. I have my own ideas about mystical experiences, and I still think it was all a coincidence. Thereafter I left Lahore to join the army, never to see Maulana Obeid Ullah Sindhi again, as he died while I was still on active service. May God bless his soul. Amin !



بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

KHATT-I-GULFAM

(A new style of writing discovered)

CALLIGRAPHY as a fine art occupies a significant place in Muslim Culture. It is considered to be an eternal art, and Allah Himself is considered as the Eternal and Calligraphist. There are frequent references to the art of writing in the Holy Quran, (96 : 3,4—85 : 21,22—50 : 16 —10 : 62— 34 : 4). This clearly shows the great stress which is laid on learning by writing. The Muslim calligraphists therefore developed this art in great reverence of the Quranic injunctions. This art was greatly admired and promoted by the rulers. Unfortunately, since the invention of printing press and typewriters this beautiful and exquisite art is going out of vogue. It has perhaps not been fully realized that the art of calligraphy had a great deal to do with the development of human character. The development of calliallgraphy also necessitated the manufacture of fine type of writing paper on which latters could be written with greater precision and refinement. It also helped in the invention of various colours of everlasting ink. This can be checked from the earliest editions of the printed books, whose paper has become brittle and the ink volatile. The various moods of writings not only reflected the movements of the writer but also projected his inner feelings of refinemant. Mir Ali Tabrezi (میر علی تبریزی) the celebrated calligraphist has some beautiful lines of poetry dapicting the art of calligraphy :

My pen works miracles and rightly enough is
the form of my words proud of its superiority

over its meaning. To each of the curves of my letters the heavenly vault confesses its bondage in salary and the value of each of my strokes in eternity itself.

Amongst the commonly known styles of writings in Muslim Calligraphy are the following :

(1) Kufic.
(2) Naskh.
(3) Nastaliq.

Each one of them is further subdivided into different categories. Nastaliq is accordingly known under the followiug categories :

(1) Shakista: (*i*) Shakista Amiz and (*ii*) Zulf-i-Arus
(2) Khatt-i-Bahar
(3) Khatt-i-Babari
(4) Khatt-i-Gulzar
(5) Khatt-i-Ghubar
(6) Khatt-i-Mahi
(7) Khatt-i-Rihan
(8) Khatt-i-Tughra

A great deal has been written on these styles and specimens from master calligraphists can be seen in the museums and in illustrated Tazkiras.

But the style of writing I am about to discuss, and which I have discovered for the first time, is not a writing of refinement, but a technical script to enshroud state matters in codified form in those remote days of Ghaznavid period. This style helped to transcribe secrets into symbolic writing for which a key was provided to de-code the original matter. It is fundamentally symbolic and primarily a code which has to be deciphered or de-coded with the help of this key. Such codes are in practice in all the countries and are utilised for army and diplo-

matic purposes. All top secret information is passed on through this system. The time of invention of this style of writing is not precisely known to me.

DISCOVERY

In a Persian manuscript in my possession I found five pages attached to it in the beginning. After a closer look I felt interested in this writing which looked more like Chinese writing than anything else. It also looked the cobwebs and spiders. At the close of these pages the following note is added by someone which says that Mahmud of Ghazna has desired that his *Pandnama* should be rendered into this writing, a few examples of the rendering of some verses is also given in these pages. The note says :

سلطان محمود غزنوی پند نامه تصنیف نمودند و به مرزا
عبدالمعید نامی که از مقربان ایشان بوده فرمودند که خط وضع
نمائیند و پند نامه را به همون خط بنویسند -

This manuscript comprises five pages only. The paper and the ink used show thāt these pages of *Khatt-i-Gulfam* and the main manuscript are of the same period. Unfortunately the manuscript is undated. However, from the type of paper and the style of writing it can be conjectured that the manuscript belongs to the tenth/eleventh century of Hijra. But the time of Mahmud Ghazna is much earlier, which goes to show that this style of writing was evolved much earlier, as it refers to the Sultan having ordered this mode of writing and having desired his verses to be rendered into it.

Seen closely the writing is flowery, somewhat resembling theChinese writing, as I have already stated. Mahmud's dominion of Ghazna was adjacent to

Sinkiang and not far from China, and many Tazkiras speak of the close relationship between the Muslim monarchs and the Chinese Emperors. Abdul Razzak has preserved this episode of history in his monumental work *Matla-us-Saadein*. *Habib-us-Seir* of Khwandemir has also preserved some account of the amicable relationship between the two embassies. I am certain this style of writing has a Chinese impact on it. Unfortunately, I am not conversant with the Chinese alphabets. But those who know may be able to compare the intonations of the two writings. As will be seen from the photograph (Plate I) that the letters of this script contain Arabic equivalents underneath, which help in the decipherment.

The need to evolve such a script is self-evident. The expanding Muslim empire and the communications necessiated that such a secret code should be invented, for purposes of keeping state matters a secret. This script, strangely enough, resembles a recently (conjectured) discovery of another writing which has been found in the human blood which is formed by the Genes of a Chromosome. "The genes within a chromosome proved to be arranged in the chromosome in a single linear file, like letters in a single line of print on a page. It can be said that heredity is coded in the 'genes' or in the DNA of the chromosome in a manner similar to a message written in morse code or in similar code used by diplomats, generals and spies."[1] This statement should not be surprising, as some day this writing in the blood of man is going to give complete history of the creation

1. Theodosius Dabzhansky, *Heredity and Nature of Man*, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1965.

and development of man. However, this was by the way to stimulate thinking in my readers, who might perhaps interest themselves in this heavenly writing. It is also one of the latest scientific researches, which seems to be bringing medicine and archaeology closer!

At this period of Mahmud of Ghazna's reign, the Chinese were greatly advanced in their civilization, and it seems quite natural that it should have had an impact on the Muslims. From this script it is clearly evident that the messages had to be first transformed into this code and then de-coded for which it was necessary to possess the key. Looking at the construction of these new letters it becomes clear that it is a time-consuming affair and only short messages could be conveniently sent. On the top of this writing the following lines can be clearly read:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

محرر ارقام وضع خط گلفام ذره حقیر مستهام محمد بقا سیره طبع

للمرام بود ملاحظه خط مومن مشهور به سلطانی بفکر می مینمود

چنین باتمام رسید به صوری کتابی انتظام یافتن (؟) [فالج] دهم شهر

ربیع الاول ۱۱۱۷ ه (؟) [با] تبصره و تحریر نموده شد۔

In this writing the script has also been called Khatt-i-Momin and Khatt-i-Sultani. This was done because of the name of Sultan Mahmud. The writer of these lines is 1117 A.H. This specimen of Khatt-i-Gulfam comprises five folios and is attached to a Persian manuscript (Sharah Diwan-i-Hafiz up to *radif Dal*. The writer is unknown and the manuscript is undated). Except for the indication in the two writings on the folios, there is no other evidence that

this style of writing was invented in the time of Mahmud of Ghazna. I have looked for traces of this writing in other books but without success. Some of the readers may be able to throw more light on this discovery and perhaps enlarge the topic. Dr. Annamarie Schimmel makes no mention of it in her recent book 'Islamic Calligraphy'.

Before concluding, it would be worthwhile mentioning that we are sadly lacking comprehensive book on the identification and assessment of manuscripts. We have no means to know the type of paper they used, although it is well known that there existed the Samarqandi, Peshawari, Sialkoti, Lahori and Kashmiri papers. We don't possess the formulas of preparing various types of permanent inks used by the ancient calligraphers. We have no literature for identifying book bindings. We have no means to aid us in reading Khatt-i-Shakista. I am sure the Orientalists of Lahore would like to undertake this important work. The future scholars would be benefited.

Maulana Abu al-Kalam Azad

(A Page from My Autobiography)

IT was in the year 1932 that I came across Maulana Azad for the first time. He had come to Lahore to attend a meeting, and was staying with Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din in his recently built bunglow on the Canal Bank. I heard the Maulana delivering an oration in a public gathering outside Mochi Gate. The garden which surrounds the city walls between the twelve gates was then in a superb condition. Green spotless lawns were available for the people to squat on. And such public meetings usually started with the onset of spring ; for, Lahore in spring was an ideal place. The lawns of the garden were filled with citrus perfume. These citrus trees which grew in abundance in Lahore in those days have today become a rarity. It used to remind one of Shiraz where the citrus perfume greeted you as you alighted from an aeroplane! These citrus trees grew in the garden all along the bank of a canal which ran through the middle of the garden. Unfortunately, this canal too is extinct today. Alas! Lahore has lost all its beauty after the creation of Pakistan.

On one such occasion the people of Lahore had thronged to listen to Maulana Azad. I had heard a great deal about the Maulana, but neither heard him nor ever read his works. I, therefore, made haste to occupy a place in the front row below the dais. I arrived there about an hour before anyone else had come in. Gradually the crowd grew and the

garden was full with people, from all walks of life. There were no loudspeakers in those days ! The oration of the Maulana was not political but of a religious nature, meant mainly for Muslims; although, there was quite a number of Hindus and Sikhs to be seen about. I was enticed by his oration the flow of which was so spontaneous that I seemed almost to flow with it. His narration was interspersed with poetical verses, and also with verses from the Holy Quran. It seemed as if he was knitting a garland of flowers whose colours were emitting or radiating exquisite perfume. One could see the heads rolling and the voice of *wah wah* and *Subhan Allah* vibrating all around. The Maulana received great ovation. Immediately after the end of his speech he made haste to drive away with his host Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din in his car.

I was so thrilled and attracted towards the Maulana that I at once resolved to cycle down to the place where he was staying. Perhaps I could get a still closer view of him and even get a chance to speak to him. So I rode straight to the house of Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, which took me a good twenty minutes. On reaching there it seemed to me as if a second meeting with a select people had been arranged, and I was there uninvited ! Quite a number of chairs had been placed in the lawn, and I quietly took my seat on one of them. People had already started to arrive. When the lawn was full the Mualana made a very dramatic appearance from the verandah, and the people stood up to pay their respect. He bade us sit down and himself took a chair amidst the gathering. Most of the people were like myself unacquainted with him. But they

were all his admirers. He chatted on various subjects but seemed to avoid political interrogation. I could make out that he had not called the people to discuss politics. After about an hour the gathering dispersed and the host with his guest disappeared into the bungalow! Two days later we went to see him off at the railway station from where he left for Peshawar.

The Maulana had gone, but he left a deep impact on my mind, that I was simply driven towards him. I had often heard people curse him for being pro-Congress, which was an Indian nationalist body, which the Muslims of India abhorred. But from his speech and talk he appeared a genuine Muslim to me, and I could not solve this riddle. Perhaps my mind was too immature at that age. However, I started to collect his writings and go through them one by one. I did not find an iota of politics in his writings, except for some statements in the court put forward as his defence when imprisoned. The entire writing comprised Islamic literature and history. I was struck by his inimitable style and depth of knowledge. I then recalled his speech which I had heard in Lahore, and came to the conclusion that there was no difference between his writings and his utterances. Ready-made sentences flowed out of his mouth just as they flowed out of his pen. His speech and writings were effortless yet knitted like a necklace of pearls. His writings made me think and re-think the various problems I had been thinking about. I was also studying Iqbal in those days, and sometimes visited him in company with friends or my uncle who was well known to Iqbal. I was amazed to find that whereas the

Maulana frequently interspersed his writings with verses, he had never quoted a single verse from Iqbal, except perhaps in one or two places. I had talked about this to several friends and we were all surprised about omission. One day, in 1935, I happened to be visiting Iqbal at the Javid Manzil in company with a friend. There were other people sitting there as well. During the conversation an elderly person happened to ask Iqbal, "How is it, sir, that Maulana Azad quotes so many Persian and Urdu verses in his writings but he never seems to quote you?" Iqbal looked surprised but smiled and replied, "What I am saying today he has long said it before me. So he does not need to repeat my verses." Iqbal had a great respect for Maulana Azad, and so did Azad have respect for Iqbal as I learnt in the later days of my life, and confirmed it. It is a very sad aspect of our history that whenever two individuals have emerged amongst us forces, whether external connivances or internal manoeuvring, always tried to bring about differences between the two and set them against each other. Some of them were wise and watched quietly, others became a prey to this intrigue. The same thing had happened with Iqbal and Azad, but the two were wise enough to understand the trick. They both kept quiet out of respect for each other. Similar differences were created between the Quaid-i-Azam and Maulana Azad, between the Quaid-i-Azam and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, and between the Quaid i-Azam and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *ad infinitum* ! It has been a great misfortune for the Muslims of the Sub-continent that such differences should have arisen during the most vital part of our history. Take it

as you may, but they are bitter facts of which we should all feel ashamed. Had this not occurred the shape of our history would have been entirely different. This has not only happened between individuals, but between every two adjacent Muslim countries. Why and how it is manoeuvred, we also know. But the worst part of it is that knowing what is happening we make no honest effort to overcome it.

During the next few years I observed that the Indian press was giving the Maulana a very meagre coverage. His speeches were rarely completely reproduced. As compared with this, columns would be reserved for the speech of Gandhi, Patel and Nehru, and only few words would be said about what the Maulana had spoken. I did not understand this mystery till just before the creation of Pakistan. However, I kept pursuing his activities and read his commentary of the Holy Quran very thoroughly. In fact I had this commentary with me when I went abroad during the II World War in 1941. I had been thrilled with his exposition of the historical portions outlined in Surah Kahf, and had a great desire to visit the places he had mentioned, and study the history of these places right on the spot. As luck would have it, my wish was fulfilled. On one occasion I was located on a small mound on the left bank of the river Tigris where Ninevah was to my left across the river, hardly two miles away as the crow flies, and the tomb of Jonnah was slightly to the right of it. At the back of Ninevah a few miles away, was Khoarsabad, the capital of Sargon the Great. To the right across the river was Nimrud, the place were Abraham was thrown into the fire!

To my right on the same side of the river Tigris was situated the ruins of Assur, the first capital of the Assyrian empire. I visited all these places and studied their history in those very places. I felt so happy that I started to record my findings in the form of a diary which was later published in the monthly "Burhan" of Delhi, between the years 1944 to 1947. I had received inspiration from the commentary of Maulana Azad. I managed to take his researches much further, and I found later on that he had read these articles.

It was in 1945 that I met the Maulana again, and it was under peculiar circumstances. This was in Delhi. I had been deputed by GHQ India to supervise a War Services Exhibition held in the Ram Lila grounds of Old Delhi. I had come up from Central India where we were receiving training for a jungle warfare with Wingate's Brigade before it opened the second front. However, I escaped the second front by being deputed to supervise this exhibition. Reaching Delhi, I was comfortably settled in a hotel. One day it just occurred to me that I should call on the Nadwa-tul-Musanneffin people who had been corresponding with and publishing my articles for the last one year. So one morning I was dressed up in uniform, and we wore boots and putties in those days. I picked up my motorcycle and rode straight to Karol Bagh where their office was situated. I parked my motorcycle in the small compound and walked straight into the verandah. Right in front of me was a door which opened into a room where a number of people were squatting on the floor. There was a meeting in progress. And what do I see? Right in front of me

opposite the door was sitting Maulana Abu al-Kalam Azad ! They must have all been taken aback to see a man dressed in uniform, especially in those days of war the uniform was abhorred. There were other bearded men sitting there on both sides of the Maulana whom I did not recognise, but found out later that there were amongst them Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni, Maulana Hifz-ur-Rehman Sewharvi, Maulana Badar-i-Alam Meeruti, Maulana Said Ahmad Akbarabadi and Maulana Atiq-ur-Rehman Usmani. I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with them later on.

Someone to my left asked me to come in and sit down. But before I did that I spontaneously said, "Sires, before I sit down, I would like to ask you a question, and it is this : I see that this is a meeting of high ranking Muslims. If today you were able to create an independent country for yourself, you would soon find out that this dress which I am wearing is the most suitable for your army. What would be your orders regarding sitting down on the floor ? Do I have to take off my boots and putties and put them on again when leaving ? This would entail a lot of trouble and time ! ! !" There was an uproar and a laughter all around. I was unanimously asked to sit down as I was, and not bother about taking my boots off. I sat down with my legs stretched out towards the door. But no one asked me as to who I was and why I had come. After a few minutes a graceful looking bearded gentleman who was sitting to my left asked me, "When did you arrive ?" "How long are you staying ?" "Where are you coming from ?" "Are you comfortably settled ?" But he never asked me who I was ! !

Then suddenly he asked for my name and I replied, "Rashid"—"Major Rashid", many of them said simultaneously. "Yes," I replied, "Major Rashid." They all stood up to greet me. This kindly gesture of their went straight into my heart. I had been honoured by a galaxy of Ulama. It was a moment of pride for me. They had all read my articles! The meeting dispersed and I shook hands with them all before they left, including Maulana Azad. I sat there for a little while after they had all left, except for the person who sat on my left and had asked me the questions. He was Al-Haj Hafiz Maulana Atiq-ur-Rehman Usmani, at present the President of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind and a Parlimentarian in India, and I understand from Maulana Said Ahmad Akbarabadi whom I recently met at the Seerat Conference in Lahore, that he was the right hand man of Indira Gandhi. He was then the organiser of the Nadwat-ul-Musanneffin and Secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind. Before I left the Maulana he asked me to have lunch with him the next Sunday. I agreed. He asked me for my favourite dish and I jokingly said that I like potatoe parathas with curd! He smilingly said, "You will have it." "Where do I come?" said I. "Right here and from this place I shall escort you."

Next Sunday I was there punctually and found the Maulana waiting for me. He greeted me and pointed to a room to my right side which also opened into the verandah. He asked me to follow him, which I did. To my surprise I found a table and a chair in one corner, and in the other a hearth with burning fire and two low chairs placed by its side. He asked me to take my seat while he prepared the

parathas for which all the material was lying ready by the side of the hearth. I felt ashamed to sit on a chair while he was sitting down, so I sat on the other low chair by his side. The Maulana was himself preparing the feast. It was a rare occasion in my life to see such hospitality. I felt rather uneasy at this sight, but the Maulana was so hospitable that I felt comforted. I sat down eating while he went on baking the parathas in the frying pan one after the other. Later, he joined me. This was a memorable occasion which I shall never forget. Such examples of hospitality are rarely seen. Years passed. When I wrote about this incidence to Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, and he published it in his weekly *Sidq*. Maulana Daryabadi is a great scholar, in fact, he is the greatest living scholar today in the Sub-continent. His style and thought are unique. He is a thinker and an excellent prose writer of Urdu and English. He has commentaries on the Quran both in the English language and Urdu. However, Maulana Usmani wrote to me that I should not have made this episode public. This was out of modesty for which the Maulana is well known.

After the exhibition I returned to my HQ, and soon received my orders of transfer to Meerut, where I had been given command of a Field Unit with a British Brigade. This was a memorable stay. Meerut was centrally situated and I could witness all the political upheavals in those critical days of our struggle for independence. Maulana Hifz-ur-Rehman Sewharvi, the then President of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind, was staying in Meerut with his family. I became his family doctor and thus was visiting him

frequently. He was a great patriot and a great Musalman and a rare scholar. He was nearly finishing his great work, the *Qasas-ul-Quran*. I frequently went to Delhi where I met several friends and they returned my calls. One of them was Maulana Said Ahmad Akbarabadi. He too is a great scholar and has attended many seminars all over the world. He has recently retired from the post of the Dean of the Faculty of Theology from Aligarh. At one time he had the unique honour of being the Principal of the famous Oriental institute, the Calcutta Madrassah. Khalique Ahmad Nizami who is today the Indian Ambassador in Damascus, was an upcoming scholar in those days. His contribution to the Muslim period of Indian history is remarkable. He has achieved a very great deal at a very young age. Maulana Badr-i-Alam Meeruti also used to come down on his motorcycle on a shooting trip. He too was a scholar of eminence and is the author of *Tarjuman-ul-Sunnat* in several volumes.

It was in November 1946 that the last session of the Indian National Congress was held in Meerut, before we achieved our independence. I was attached to a British Brigade, but I managed to get permission from my Commander to attend the session. I was permitted to do so in full uniform! I attended all the sessions where every one stared at me. This was a memorable session as a lot of poison had been thrown out by the Hindu speakers against the Muslims. It was in its opening session that Patel had challenged the Muslims with a sword! After he had finished, Maulana Abu al-Kalam Azad sprang to his feet and throwing his shawl over his shoulders, opened his oration thus: "A nation which

has not seen a sword for nearly one thousand years, how come it that they threaten us with it?" There was pindrop silence and the Maulana burst out with an oration the like of which I had never heard before. Gandhi was sobbing and Patel and Nehru were wiping their tears with their handkerchiefs, and there was crying all around.

I came home and related the whole story to my wife, who said, "Why don't you ask the Maulana to join the Muslim League?" I thought for a while and said, "You better ask this question yourself. I will arrange for a meeting." "And so I did. And one morning at 4.30 *a.m.* accompanied by General Shah Nawaz of the INA we walked into his apartment in the Congress Pandal. He had just finished with Mr. Asif Ali who was walking away with files under his arm. We sat down while the Maulana had tea brought in for us. He was looking fresh and cheery. I mentioned about his oration of the day before and praised it. He laughed and said these people only can be kept in their place by such retorts. Then there was silence, and I kept looking at my wife expecting her to put the question. But she was hesitant, and later told me that she was so awe-inspired by his personality that she did not dare ask him the question! The Maulana anticipating something asked me why were we looking at each like that? At last I said to the Maulana that my wife wishes him to join the Muslim League; especially after I had related to her the episode of the opening session of the Congress. He smiled and said, "My sister, Pakistan is coming. No one can stop it. But all the Muslims will not be able to migrate to their new homeland. Those that will be left behind will

need someone to look after their interests." This happened on the 27th of November, 1946.

The day after the speech was delivered not a word from the speech of Maulana Azad appeared in the press ! ! ! I was very annoyed and upset about it, for I thought it was very necessary for the Muslims of India to know how the Maulana was fighting single-handed against the Hindu might. I went to see Maulana Sewharvi who seemed very alive to this omission. All he said was that the press was in complete control of the Hindus and did not relish that the Muslims should know the exact role which the nationalist Muslims were playing inside the Congress. However, he said he would report the proceedings to the press himself. I felt satisfied. But the next morning the papers only brought half a dozen lines of the Maulana's speech. I again went to him and brought a copy of his report. It took me quite a few days to compile the true proceedings which I drafted in the form of a lengthy article and came to Lahore and saw the late Mr. Hamid Nizami, Editor of the *Nawa-i-Waqi*. That genius of a journalist read the article and appreciated it and said he would publish it. This article was published in the *Nawa-i-Waqt* of 15 April, 1947, and created quite a sensation amongst the Muslims of India. Obviously the Hindus did not like it. They were all the time trying to hide from becoming known how the Muslims were fighting for their rights within the Congress high command.

In the meantime another serious mishap had taken place which flared up a chain reaction of communal riots throughout India. This was the massacre of Muslims in Garhmukteshwar, about 24 miles

from Meerut, situated on the river Ganges. This was an annual place of pilgrimage for the Hindus, and had a population of about 700 Muslims who out of sheer goodwill used to set up shops to facilitate the short sojourn of the pilgrims. It happened on a full moon night when all the pilgrims had arrived and the bathing in the river had started. All the shops of the Muslims and their houses were set on fire, according to a set plan. The Muslims were slaughtered and their bodies thrown into the wells. Out of a population of 700 about 450 of them were killed, which included women and children. I was asked to go there immediately in the middle of the night by my Brigade Commander and arrange for their treatment and evacuation. The civil authorities had become absolutely paralysed. I arrived there at 2 a.m. and found fire aglow all over. The sky was red with smoke. With great difficulty we were able to get near the village and we found it still harder to move towards the river along the road on which all the shops were burning. While we were carrying the bodies to a safe place which we had selected for a temporary hospital, a wounded man pointed to a well and we looked into it with torch light to find it packed with wounded and dead men! We cleard this with great difficulty, and carrying about 80 wounded and burnt people with us we left for Meerut, to send a burial party and report the whole episode to the Commander. The next day I informed the Jamiat-ul-Ulama and they immediately arranged for an enquiry of which I became an eye-witness. In the meantime the news spread throughout the country like wild fire. The returning pilgrims had to pass through Aligarh, Meerut and Hapur on

their way home. These were all Muslim majority areas where the people had got ready to take revenge. But the pilgrims were escorted by the British troops who stood on either side of the road all along their route. In spite of these strict precautions a sensational incidence took place. When the train carrying 800 pilgrims on its way to Delhi reached Hapur, the engine driver who was a Muslim disconnected his engine from the train and ran away to Delhi leaving the pilgrims at the mercy of the rioters who did not spare a single person. They had thus taken their revenge. When interrogated by the enquiry committee the driver said, I went to Delhi to get aid ! There were repercussions and retaliations all over the country. The unfortunate accident of Garhmukteshwar was responsible for setting up a wave of genocide before the Sub-continent was split into two independent countries.

Thus is the woeful tale of Hindu high-handedness. Soon afterwards I received orders to proceed to Burma who was going to receive its independence. I did not see the havoc at the time of partition of India but I became a witness to the atrocities of foreign Powers which did their worse to demoralise the Burmans, and had virtually destroyed all their spirit of independence. I returned to Pakistan in 1949 to breath an air of freedom in my own homeland which I had missed both in India and Burma.

Allama Iqbal and the Ancestry of Napoleon Bonaparte

IN a very impressive article, "Iqbal—My Father," Dr. Justice Javid Iqbal has stated, 'He told me that the ancestors of Napoleon originally hailed from Arabia.' (*Iqbal : Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, edited by Hafeez Malik, and published by the Columbia University Press, New York, 1971, page 61). This is a very important statement of Iqbal, which unfortunately has gone untackled. I have a few more details about this statement, which I have been trying to substantiate, and during my research I have gathered a few more points which I wish to put before the readers.

ALLAMA'S REMARK

It was in 1936 that I visited the Allama in company with Syed Nazir Niazi. This visit was in connection with the photographing of his manuscript 'Pas Cheh Bayad Kard,' with a view to publish it in the fourth issue of *Talu-i-Islam*. This was to be edited by Syed Nazir Niazi. This manuscript was photographed by me. The journal was later handed over to Ghulam Ahmad Parvez. A few other people were also there at the time. During the conversation the Allama said : "Spain had been conquered by the Muslims before Tariq landed at Gibraltar and this General's strategy was to go through Corsica in which an Arab tribe called Banu Faras formed his advance guard." And he further added, "Napoleon was a descendant of this tribe."

Years rolled by, Allama Iqbal passed away, World

War II started and ended, Pakistan came on the world map. All these years I spent almost roaming round and this remark of Iqbal never occurred to me. Eventually when I settled down after my return from Burma and then Iran, in 1951, I started to ponder upon this problem. Unfortunately, I could not find any trace of this tribe except for a very brief mention of it by Tabari. Later while in Europe, I happened to mention about it to some scholars (the late Prof. Arberry was one of them). One of them told me that Napoleon was born in Corsica's capital Bonifascio and that his name Bonaparte was derived from Bonifascio! This was later confirmed by me from J. S. C. Abbott's "Life of Napoleon." I was thrilled by this idea, and at once jumped to the conclusion that perhaps Bonifascio was a later form of Banu Faras. I pursued my investigations, but could not find anyone to support my assumptions. On my way back home from Sweden in 1965, I stopped at Rome to make further investigations. I very much wanted to visit Corsica, but unfortunately I could not make it. However, in Rome I posed this question to a few people, but they laughed it off. Earlier when Mr. Dehlavi was Foreign Secretary, I requested him to enquire from our Ambassador in Spain if he could throw some light on it. Mr. J. A. Rahim was our Ambassador in Spain at that time. He also turned my request down in a lighter vein. I was rather disappointed. Quite recently, I wrote to Prof. W. Montgomery Watt, the celeberated scholar in Islamic studies, in Edinburgh, asking for his opinion on this matter. He replied to say, 'With regard to your mention of Tariq what you say is quite correct, and I have myself mentioned him in my book *Islamic*

Spain" . . . I spoke of this expedition as a reconnaissance force . . . . I do not think Tarif could have come from Corsica and I doubt whether the Corsican names you mention would have any Arabic origin."

So much then is established that Tarif went into Spain before Tariq and a town on the eastern coast of Spain is still known as Tarif after his name. It is immaterial whether it was an expeditionary force or a force of reconnaissance. The question arose, which way did he go? Iqbal's information regarding the tribe of Banu Faras could not have been wrong. If it is proved that this lived in Corsica, and the name of its capital Bonifascio is after its name, then it will become easy to link up Napoleon Bonaparte with Banu Faras. Allama Iqbal's information is certainly based on facts of history which he must have read somewhere. It is unfortunate that he did not have an occasion to elaborate on this important aspect of Islamic History.

Napoleon is said to have been born in Corsica, as I have stated above. His biographer J.S.C. Abbott further says about his ancestry. The descendant of a family whose line could be traced far back into the twilight of 'Dark Ages.' Now it is well known that the Europeans called the Middle Ages as 'the Dark Ages, the time of Muslim conquest of Europe. It was the time when the Europeans were gathering knowledge in Spain at the feet of the Muslim scholars. Says Winwood Reade in the 'Martyrdom of Man': "The Arabs raised Spain to a height of prosperity which it has never since attained . . . . they extensively manufactured silk, cotton, and marino woollen goods, which they despatched to Constantinople by sea, and which were then diffused through the valley

of the Danube over savage Christiandom . . . . when scarcely a priest in England could translate Latin into his mother tongue, and when even in Italy a monk who had picked up a smattering of mathematics was looked upon as a magician, here was a country in which every child was taught to read and write, in which every town possessed a public library in which book collecting was a mania . . . . in which women earned distinction as poets and grammarians, and in which the blind were even scholars! (page 256, Thinker's Library). It is thus quite clear what Abbott means by the Dark Ages."

In so far as I have been able to trace, the Banu Faras were a branch of Banu Irfan, who were established in Egypt. It is most probable that these brave people had established themselves in Corsica. It were these people about whom Hazrat Ali had told the people of Iraq, 'If in your place I had two hundred from the tribe of Banu Faras bin Ghanim, it would have been much better.' (*Maajam-ul-Qabail al Arab* by Umar Raza Kahala, Vol. III, Beirut, 1968). Obviously, it were these brave people who had settled in Corsica and formed the advance guard of Tarif Abu Zarah. This expedition took place in September A.D. 710, while Tariq ibn Zayad landed at Gibraltar in April 711. (*A History of Gibraltar* by Captain Sayer, Saunders Otlay and Company, London, 1862).

The capital of Corsica called Bonifascio is a metathesical form of Banu Faras and the word Bonaparte is a further derivative from this word. Bonifascio thus means: Boni—Banu or Bani: Faras—Fascio! I now leave my findings to our Orientalists versed in the etymology of words and metathesical transpositions, and hope they would devote some time in solving this riddle which Allama Iqbal has left to us unsolved.

Islam and Islamic History

ISLAMIC history is a very wide subject and it is not possible to cover this most absorbing and fascinating panorama in one article. It comprises so many facets that to elaborate any one of them would require a lot of space. I shall, therefore be jumping from place to place and from facet to facet. The various facets of Islamic history pertain to the various aspects—religion, politics, culture, and civilisation—to which Islam has made commendable contributions.

Before I proceed, I shall try to define Islam and Islamic history. Islam is a pre-Quranic religion. It is a religion of peace and submission to the will of Almighty God. According to a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet, God was a hidden treasure and He desired that He should become known, therefore, He created this heaven and earth and man, so that man may ponder over the universe and see the bounties of the Great Creator and submit to His commands. When the progeny of man multiplied and some form of society emerged, it became necessary that laws be promulgated to bring human society under discipline. This was the start of religion. The basic principles enunciated from time to time culminated and were perfected in Islam, the latest and last edition of God's Revelation. The Quran has not recorded dialogues on the subject of Islam from the time of Adam to that of Prophet Abraham, but we find Abraham calling himself the first Mussalman. The stories of nations narrated in the Quran and the fate of disobeyers are amply illustrative of the behaviour of those

people. To every nation was sent a Prophet who preached to the people to worship the one God, yet they went astray. But for the first time in human history, it was the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) who suceessfully preached and conveyed the message to the whole world. On the spread of Islam nothing would be better than to quote from "The Martyrdom of Man' by Winwood Reade. The book says : "Instead of repining that Mohammad did no more, we have reasons to be astonished that he did so much. His career is the best example that can be given of the influence of an individual in human history. That a single man created the glory of his nation and spread his language over half the earth. The words which he preachd to jeering crowds twelve hundred years ago are now being studied by scholars or by devotees in London and Paris and Berlin, in Mecca where he laboured and in Medina where he died, in Constantinople, in Cairo, in Fez, in Timbaktu, in Jerusalem, in Damascus, in Basra, in Baghdad, in Bokhara, in Kabul, in Calcutta, in Pekin, on the steps of Central Asia, in the islands of the Indian archipelago, in lands which are as yet unmarked upon our maps, in the oases of thirsty deserts, in obscure villages situated by unknown streams. It was Muhammad who did all this, for he uttered the book which carried the language, and he prepared the army which carried the book."

'DIN' & RELIGION

One thing must be pointed out here: that the Quran calls Islam a 'Din' and not a 'Mazhab' or religion. There is a very subtle difference between the two. Islam is man's natural religion. It is completely synchronised with the cosmic reality out-

side and hence is admirably suited to develop in all climes and all times. It represents the whole man, allows all his urges to develop, and thus imposes no restriction on any of his instincts. Religion on the other hand, is only an idealogy which at best represents only one urge. For instance, Communism merely represents the urge of hunger and does not look into man's spiritual needs. Fascism is another idealogy which represents the urge of power. Hinduism and Buddhism are supernatural religions and only look to the spiritual needs of man. But Islam is a 'Din', it represents the whole man and caters for the development of all his urges, whether they be related to sex, hunger, power or spirit. All these urges have been taken into consideration by the Quranic laws. Man is asked to develop these urges and put them to utilitarian use for the progress of humanity. From the time of Adam to the time of Abraham society had become gradually organised and therefore rules to regulate society were very necessary. In each of the subsequent revelations details were being given out, but they could not be declared all at once as the mind of man was still developing and required time to grasp the intricate problems of life. Noah had doubts about how God could raise the dead to life; Moses was convinced of all the attributes of the Almighty but thought that unless he had a glimpse of Him his faith would not have the desired strength. By the time of the Holy Prophet, however, the 'Din' had been completed and man's mind had fully evolved. This is proved by the fact that the Prophet had no doubts whatsoever about the existence or the attributes of the Almighty. Instead of the Prophet asking any questions, it was the Almighty who took him to the

heavens for a dialogue.

Dealing with the political aspect of Islamic history, I will ignore the various political differences just as I skipped over the various religious sects while discussing the nature of Islam. Suffice it to say that in the days of the Holy Prophet, there was only one party. There is no concept of opposition in Islam; it visualises one-party rule. Islamic concept of administration contains within itself all the rules of government provided they are applied and implemented within the dictates of the Quran. Political upheavals in the history of Islam have brought out one remarkable lesson. That is, during the course of years each people responsible for the spread of Islam became lax and dwindled. Their place was taken up by another people who came within the fold of Islam. They utilised the force of Islam and helped to take it forward. In the present, we have reached the lowest depth of demoralisation. One wonders if Islamic history is going to repeat itself again. I leave this speculation to the intelligentsia but one thing must be pointed out: any nation that comes within our fold must be a virile nation equipped with modern knowledge.

2 PARTS OF THE QURAN

The history of the Quranic revelation shows that the Quran was revealed in two portions—the Makki verses and the Madani verses. The former, which were revealed first, pertained mainly to moral reconstruction. It was on the basis of morals that the foundation of Muslim society was laid. After Islamic society had been knit into a solid body it went out to fight the infidels. The Madani verses relate to

statecraft and these were revealed only after the Muslims had acquired a land and territory of their own. This is a very important point in the study of Islamic history. Any state or society which is not based on sound morals is bound to disintegrate. Therefore any future renaissance of Islam has to be based on sound morals clearly laid down in the Holy Quran. Islam had come to preach the worship of one true God. The corollaries that follow this supreme dictate in social, political and intellectual spheres are not to be lost sight of. The impact of the message of Islam has been so great that today the world religions are fast re-orientating their religious thought. The scientific advance made by man is compelling him to believe in the one God, the Creator of this cosmos where everything is moving with mathematical precision. The atomic researches and the Quantum Theory are bringing man nearer to his Creator. The era of intellectual pursuit among the Muslims came when Muslim society had been knit into an impregnable unity. It was the result of a prolonged conflict with the Byzantine Empire. The wars and Crusades gave a chance to the Muslims to study the Greek arts and sciences. The Muslims studied them with the greatest ease because to acquire knowledge was a religious injunction. They learnt their languages and translated all important scientific and philosophical works. Not only that, the Muslims carried on further research and improved upon the Greek theories.

From here I turn on to the cultural and civilising side of Islamic history. I would again quote from Winwood Reade's book. "The Arabs," he writes, "raised Spain to a height which it has never since attained. They covered the land with palaces, mos-

ques, hospitals and bridges and with enormous acqueducts which penetrating the sides of mountains or sweeping on lofty arches across valleys, rivalled the monuments of ancient Rome. The Arabs imported various types of tropical fruits and vegetables, the culture of which has departed with them. They grew, prepared and imported sugar. They discovered new mines of gold and silver, and lead. They extensively manufactured silk, cotton and merino-woollen goods, which they dispatched to Constantinople by sea, and which were then diffused through the valley of the Danube over savage Christendom... The metropolis of this noble country was Cordova... There were ten miles of lighted streets... At a time when books were so rare in Europe that the man who possessed one often gave it to the church and placed it on the altar *pre-remedio annime sui*, to obtain remission of his sins; when three or four hundred parchment scrolls were considered a magnificent endowment for the richest monastery, when scarcely a priest in England could translate Latin into his mother tongue; and when in Italy a monk who had picked up a smattering of mathematics was looked upon as a magician; here was a country in which every child was taught to read and write; in which every town possessed a public library; in which book-collecting was a mania; in which cotton and afterwards linen paper was manufactured in enormous quantities, in which ladies earned distinction as poets and grammarians; and in which even the blind were scholars; in which men of science were making chemical experiments, using astrolabes in the observatory, inventing flying machines, and studying the astronomy and algebra of Hindustan."

The words 'flying machines' in the closing lines

of the quotation are noteworthy. It is very significant that the word 'machine' has been used. This must have been some sort of an aircraft. Prof. Hitti has in his recent researches come to the conclusion that the person making these experiments was Ibn Firnas.

SCIENCES

The history of Islamic sciences is enormous; it can be conveniently said that all that Europe now possesses was passed on to it through the Muslim centres in Spain. Many Christian scholars from England, France and Germany came to study at the feet of Muslim scholars in Cordova. Just as the Muslims had translated the whole Greek knowledge in their language, similarly the Europeans rendered the Islamic knowledge back into Latin, German, French and English. Then they carried on the research further till we find science in the state it is today. Latin translations of the Muslim works were included in the curricula of European universities till as late as the 10th century. Saracenic architecture penetrated into central Europe and England. Tiled bathrooms with hot and cold water arrangements were found in every house in Cordova; and this system of highly improved sanitation was imported from there into England. Thus the European civilisation is a child of the Islamic civilisation. They took it up from where we had left it and improved upon it.

One wonders what was the real cause of the downfall of the Muslims after they had achieved such heights in intellectual achievements and conquered vast areas of the known world. Allama Ibn Khaldun and Allama Shakaib Arsalan have written much on this subject and quite justifiably too. Whatever the

causes stated by them, I feel there is only one significant cause : internal dissensions, whether political or religious, put an end to this splendour. The Holy Quran is quite explicit on this point. It abhors dissensions and discourages controversies. It even says that if you go near controversies and create differences among yourself you will be so weakened that your enemy will take advantage of this weakness. The exact translation of the relevant verse is as follows:

"And obey God and His Apostle; and fall into no disputes; lest ye lose heart; and your power depart."

The exact translation of the words *tazhaba rihaqum* means the air of superiority which you have built up around yourself will depart. It has immense psychological implications. Unfortunately, the Muslims have not only neglected this order of the Quran but have concocted sayings of the Prophet quite to the contrary. These differences—whether political, religious or social—have always led to the disintegration of Muslim power. It happened in Spain; it has happened in India; and things in Pakistan today are not very encouraging.

There is a great need today to rewrite the Islamic Fiqh. We must form boards of eminent judges for this purpose. The times have advanced and society has to be adjusted according to modern needs—of course in the light of the Quran. In the past it was the duty of the ruler to set up a board from time to time and revise the Fiqh. The last effort was made by Aurangzeb who had the 'Fatawa-i-Alamgiri' compiled. We have many adjustments to make. The Quran is the last revealed word of God, true for all times, but it is we who have to apply it to our modern needs. The task is laborious but not very difficult.

The controversies must be reviewed and removed, otherwise they will go on multiplying. Every problem must be sorted out in the light of the Quran, and if found insoluble all schools of Fiqh must be consulted keeping in view what the authentic Traditions pronounce on the problem. The aim should be to simplify life and not to make it complicated. If we are able to do this today we might give a lead to the Muslim world; but if we do not do it, someone else will take the lead.

By the same Author

1. **Essay On Islam,**
   Din Muhammadi Press, Karachi. 1960 (English).
2. **Maarif-un-Nafs,**
   Majlis Akhwan-us-Safa, Karachi. 1961 (Urdu).
3. **Historical Dissertations,** Vol. I
   Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi. 1962 (English).
4. **Progress of Medical Research in Pakistan,**
   PMRC, Karachi. 1962 (English).
5. **Maarif-ul-Athar,**
   Nadwatul Musannefin, Delhi. 1963 (Urdu).
6. **Tazkira Talib Amuli,**
   Ferozsons, Karachi. 1965 (Urdu)
7. **Ten Years of Medical Research in Pakistan,**
   PMRC,.Karachi. 1966 (English).
8. **The Book of Standing Orders and Instructions,**
   JPMC, Karachi. 1967 (English).
9. **Tazkira Shuarai Punjab,**
   Iqbal Academy, Karachi, 1967 (Persian).
10. **Re-evaluation of Islamic Thought,**
    Universal Books, Lahore.
11. **Islami Safar Nama,** (under print) Kutub Khana Rashidia, Lahore.
12. **Historical Dissertation,** Vol. II,
    Progressive Books Lahore.
13. **Iqbal, Quran and the Western World,** (under print).
14. **Rang-i-Khumar,** (a Collection of Urdu articles) Vol. I, (under print).